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**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
AFGHANISTAN AND THE PROPOSED
DRAWDOWN OF U.S. FORCES**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE PROPOSED DRAWDOWN OF U.S. FORCES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Thursday, June 23, 2011.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Good morning.

The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the President's decision to withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year and the remaining 23,000 surge forces by next summer.

My position on the war effort has remained consistent: Afghanistan's stability is vital to our national security. Any removal of forces should be based on conditions on the ground and consistent with the advice of our senior military leaders. Based on the President's speech last night, it is not clear to me that his decision was based on either.

At West Point, in 2009, the President committed to a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan by surging 33,000 troops. Every witness before this committee has testified that this strategy is beginning to bear fruit by seizing the momentum from the Taliban.

Many Members have been to Afghanistan and seen this progress for themselves. Districts that were once Taliban strongholds are now being contested, and once-contentious regions are being handed over to Afghan security forces. The Afghan National Army and Police [ANA and ANP] are growing in number and beginning to develop the capabilities to secure their country. These gains are significant. We should guard them jealously.

I am deeply concerned, therefore, about the aggressive troop withdrawals proposed by President Obama. The President's decision could jeopardize the hard-won gains our troops and allies have made over the past 18 months and, potentially, the safety of the remaining forces. This announcement also puts at risk a negotiated settlement with reconcilable elements of the Taliban, who will now believe they can wait out the departure of U.S. forces and return to their strongholds.

Today, I hope to hear more about the details underpinning the President's plan; that we have allowed enough time to achieve suc-

cess; that this drawdown is a military, not a political, consideration; and that it does not put our remaining forces at risk.

I am interested not only in the number of forces the President plans to redeploy, but the location and composition of those forces. I am concerned that we will withdraw combat forces before they are able to cement recent gains and that areas which have been economy-of-force missions thus far will now never witness similar progress.

With the Taliban stumbling, we need a strategy designed to knock the enemy to the mat, not give them a breather. I wish I had heard the President forcefully renew his commitment to winning in Afghanistan. We need our Commander in Chief to remind the American people why this fight must be won and to reassure our military service members and their families that their sacrifices are not in vain.

Instead, I heard a campaign speech, short on details and confusing multiple theaters of operation that have little to do with a plan to succeed in Afghanistan. I look forward to hearing more about how this plan will advance our shared national security interests.

I would yield now to our ranking member, Mr. Smith.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 53.]

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank our witnesses for being here this morning to further explain the President's policy in Afghanistan.

It is a very, very difficult set of choices that confront our country. I think everyone agrees on two broad points: One, we want our troops home as soon as possible. The cost and finances but, more importantly, in terms of lives and those injured is enormous. And we are weary of the war, without question, and we want our troops to come home as soon as possible.

But the second thing that we want is we want to make sure that Afghanistan does not descend back into chaos, as it did in the late 1980s and early 1990s. We understand the threat to our national security that comes from an Afghanistan that is in chaos, the safe havens that will become available to Al Qaeda and Taliban and other allies that clearly threaten us.

The question, the challenge that our two witnesses before us today and the President and others face is, how do you balance those two things? And I think the President has struck a very, very reasonable balance in this plan.

It is important to point out that, even with the drawdown that is announced, we will have vastly more troops in Afghanistan at the end of that drawdown late next year than we had when President Obama took office. Nearly twice as many U.S. troops will be there. It is a relatively modest drawdown over the next year and a half.

And the other point that I hope folks will understand: Yes, there is a risk in us leaving, but that will always be the case. If we had

150,000 troops there and kept them for 10 years, 10 years from now when we decide to draw them down, there would be a risk. This is not a historically stable part of the world. That risk will always be there.

But what fails to be understood and what I applaud the President for emphasizing is the risk involved in staying too long, and not just in terms of the cost that we will bear as a country and certainly the cost that our men and women serving in uniform will bear, but to the very security of Afghanistan itself.

On a daily basis, we hear complaints from the Afghan people about our military presence, about civilian deaths, about the simple fact of having 100,000 or, add the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] folks in there, 150,000 U.S. troops in your country. It is not a pleasant experience. It doesn't make you want to support your government, to know that they are reliant on 150,000 foreign troops and, in the case of a Muslim country particularly, 150,000 western troops in your country. That, too, has a risk attached to it.

So you have to strike a balance. If we were to say to the Afghan people tomorrow, "We are just going to stay here for as long as we feel like it," that, too, would undermine our national security interests. A balance must be struck. And I think in the President's speech last night he struck that balance. If I have a concern, it is that we may be staying there too long into next year.

So I can certainly understand why our two witnesses and the President and all those who put together this decision have a difficult balance to strike. And I, too, look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how that plan is going to play out over the course of the next year and a half and beyond, because there is no question that Afghanistan and Pakistan are central to our national security interests. There is also no question, I think we all wish they weren't. It is a very, very difficult part of the world.

But we have to manage a plan there to try to protect our national security interests. You know, I applaud the President for taking steps in that direction. And I look forward to the testimony from our witnesses that will further elaborate on those plans.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 55.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. I know this is very short notice, but it is very timely, and I appreciate you making the extraordinary effort to get statements out and to be here today.

We are fortunate to have with us the Honorable Michèle Flournoy, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; and Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS].

We were talking the other day, and he made the comment that people kind of figure—have made comments to him that, "Well, you know, you are just going to coast through the next so many months," and he says, "Yes, like I have coasted through the last 4 months."

People, when they were preparing their New Year's resolutions, probably weren't thinking about Egypt and Yemen and Libya and

all of the different things that are happening. So, again, I want to thank you for your many years of service and for making the extraordinary effort to be with us here today.

And we will listen now to Ms. Flournoy. Or who——

Admiral MULLEN. Yeah, I think we——

The CHAIRMAN. Excuse me. Admiral Mullen.

**STATEMENT OF ADM MICHAEL G. MULLEN, USN, CHAIRMAN,
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**

Admiral MULLEN. Good morning, sir.

Mr. Chairman and Representative Smith, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you the President's decisions regarding the beginning of our draw-down in Afghanistan and our continued transfer of responsibilities to Afghan National Security Forces [ANSF].

Let me start by saying that I support the President's decisions, as do Generals Mattis and Petraeus. We were given voice in this process, we offered our views freely and without hesitation, and they were heard. As has been the case throughout the development and execution of the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, the Commander in Chief presided over an inclusive and comprehensive discussion about what to do next, and I am grateful for that.

And I can tell you that foremost on everyone's mind throughout the discussion was preserving the success our troops and their civilian counterparts have achieved thus far. We believed back when the strategy was established in December of 2009 that it would be about now, this summer, before we could determine whether or not we had it right, whether the resources were enough and the counterinsurgency focus was appropriate. Well, now we know. We did have it right. The strategy is working.

Al Qaeda is on their heels, and the Taliban's momentum in the south has been checked. We have made extraordinary progress against the mission we have been assigned and are, therefore, now in a position to begin a responsible transition out of Afghanistan.

We will, as the President has ordered, withdraw 10,000 American troops by the end of this year and complete the withdrawal of the remaining 23,000 surge troops by the end of next summer. General Petraeus and his successor will be given the flexibility inside these deadlines to determine the pace of this withdrawal and the rearrangement of remaining forces inside the country.

There is no jumping ship here; quite the contrary. We will have at our disposal the great bulk of the surge forces throughout this and most of the next fighting season. And I am comfortable that conditions on the ground will dominate, as they have dominated, future decisions about our force posture in Afghanistan.

Let me be candid, however. No commander ever wants to sacrifice fighting power in the middle of a war, and no decision to demand that sacrifice is ever without risk. This is particularly true in a counterinsurgency, where success is achieved not solely by technological prowess or conventional superiority but by the wit and the wisdom of our people as they pursue terrorists and engage the local populace on a daily basis. In a counterinsurgency, fire-power is manpower.

I do not intend to discuss the specifics of the private advice I rendered with respect to these decisions. As I said, I support them.

What I can tell you is the President's decisions are more aggressive and incur more risk than I was originally prepared to accept. More force for more time is, without doubt, the safer course. But that does not necessarily make it the best course. Only the President, in the end, can really determine the acceptable level of risk we must take. I believe he has done so.

The truth is, we would have run other kinds of risks by keeping more forces in Afghanistan longer. We would have made it easier for the Karzai administration to increase their dependency on us. We would have denied the Afghan security forces, who have grown in capability, opportunities to further exercise that capability and to lead. We would have signaled to the enemy and to our regional partners that the Taliban still possess strength enough to warrant the full measure of our presence; they do not. We would have also continued to limit our own freedom of action there and in other places around the world, globally. The President's decisions allow us to reset our forces more quickly, as well as to reduce the not-inconsiderable cost of deploying those forces.

In sum, we have earned this opportunity. Though not without risk, it is also not without its rewards. And so we will take that risk and we will reap those rewards. The war in Afghanistan will enter a new phase, and we will continue to fight it. And we will continue to need the assistance, persistence, and expertise of our allies and partners.

The President said it well last night: Huge challenges remain. This is the beginning, not the end, of our effort to wind down this war. No one in uniform is under any illusion that there will not be more violence, more casualties, more struggles, or more challenges as we continue to accomplish the mission there.

We know that the progress we have made, though considerable, can still be reversed without our constant leadership, the contributions of our partners and regional nations, and a more concerted effort by the Afghan Government to address corruption in their ranks and deliver basic goods and services to their people.

But the strategy remains the right one. This transition and the concurrent focus on developing the Afghan National Security Forces was always a part of that strategy. In fact, if you consider the continued growth of the ANSF, the Taliban could well face more combined force, in terms of manpower, in 2012 than they did this year, and capable enough if the ANSF has strong leadership and continued outside support.

Going forward, we also know we need to support an Afghan political process that includes reconciliation with the Taliban who break with Al Qaeda, renounce violence, and accept the Afghan Constitution. And we know we need to continue building a strategic partnership with Afghanistan, one based not on military footprint but on mutual friendship.

Our true presence will diminish, as it should, but the partnership between our two nations will and must endure. That is ultimately the way we win in Afghanistan, not by how much we do, but by how much they do for themselves and for their country; not

by how much our respective soldiers fight, but by how much our statesmen lead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I stand ready to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Mullen can be found in the Appendix on page 57.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Flournoy.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHÈLE FLOURNOY, UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Secretary FLOURNOY. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting us both here today to update you on Afghanistan.

As you all know, in his December 2009 speech at West Point, President Obama announced a surge of 30,000 U.S. troops, with the clear objectives of seizing the initiative from the Taliban and reversing the momentum of the campaign on the ground. At that time, the President also specified that the surge would not be open-ended and that he would begin to reduce U.S. surge forces beginning in July 2011.

Last night, true to his word, President Obama announced to the American people that the United States is beginning a deliberate, responsible drawdown of our surge forces in Afghanistan. An initial drawdown of 10,000 troops will occur over the course of this year, with a further drawdown of the remainder of the surge by the end of summer 2012. Secretary Gates believes that this decision provides our commanders with the right mix of flexibility, resources, and time to continue building on our significant progress on the ground.

Even after the recovery of the surge forces, totaling about 33,000 troops, we will still have 68,000 U.S. service members in Afghanistan. That is more than twice the number as when President Obama took office. Clearly, this is not a rush to the exits that will jeopardize our security gains.

More importantly, at the end of summer 2012, when all of the surge forces are out, there will actually be more Afghan and coalition forces in the fight than there are today. That is because, by the time we complete our drawdown, we anticipate that the Afghan National Security Forces will have added another 55,000-plus members, not including the Afghan local police. The growth in the quantity and the quality of the ANSF, which has fielded more than 100,000 additional forces over the past 18 months, is one of the critical conditions that is enabling the drawdown of the U.S. surge forces.

More broadly, as the admiral said, our strategy in Afghanistan is working as designed. The momentum has shifted to the coalition and Afghan forces, and, together, we have degraded the Taliban's capability and achieved significant security gains, especially in the Taliban's heartland in the south.

These security gains are enabling key political initiatives to make progress. We have begun a transition process that will ultimately put Afghans in the lead for security nationwide by 2014. We

are beginning to see reintegration and reconciliation processes gain traction. And we are in discussions with the Afghans about a strategic partnership that will signal our enduring commitment to the Afghan people and to regional peace and stability. Together, these initiatives promise a future Afghanistan that is stable, peaceful, and secure.

So I want to emphasize that this announcement in no way marks a change in American policy or strategy in Afghanistan. It is wholly consistent with the goals that President Obama and our allies agreed to at Lisbon, the NATO summit at Lisbon last year. There, we committed to the gradual transfer of security leadership to the Afghans by the end of 2014 and to an enduring commitment to a security partnership with Afghanistan to ensure that we never again repeat the mistake of simply abandoning that nation to its fate and risking the re-establishment of Al Qaeda safe havens there.

I want to emphasize that, although our progress in Afghanistan has certainly been substantial and our strategy is on track, there are significant challenges that remain. In the months ahead, we will be confronted by an enemy that will try to regain the momentum and the territory that it has lost to Afghan and coalition forces.

However, that enemy will also face an Afghan population that is increasingly experiencing the benefits of security and self-governance. And those benefits will only become clearer as we begin the transition to full Afghan security responsibility in selected areas. Those communities will provide us with useful lessons on security and governance, as well as a potential model for other parts of the country.

Finally, let me emphasize how crucial it is for us to maintain the continuing role of our coalition partners in Afghanistan: 48 countries with some 47,000 troops along our side. These partner nations have made significant contributions and significant sacrifices. Even as we recognize the progress that we and our partners have made toward our shared goal of destroying terrorist safe havens, we must sustain this partnership to ensure that we ultimately leave behind an Afghanistan that will never again serve as a base for terrorist attacks against the United States or our allies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Smith, and distinguished members of the committee. That concludes my remarks, and we look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Flournoy can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

You know, there is not a single Member of Congress who does not want our troops to come home as soon as possible. Personally, I believe the objective of transitioning to an Afghan lead on security within 3 years is both a desirable and an achievable objective.

The last visit I made, compared to the one before, I saw significant progress. Areas that we weren't able to go into before, we were able to go and walk down the streets in Marjah without body armor. We opened a school while we were there. I think we have made significant gains. This will enable, as we transition, it will enable our forces to come home.

However, I am concerned that the drawdown plan announced by the President last night will significantly undermine our ability to responsibly enact this transition. I am concerned with the gains we have made in the south. We have been holding, as I understand, more of a holding pattern in the north and the east. And the plan was, I thought, to move more of those forces, as we solidified the gains in the south, to move them to the north and the east. And I am concerned that this drawdown may not let us do all that we could in that area.

Admiral Mullen, based on your best professional judgment and that of your commanders, how many of the forces to be drawn down will be combat forces?

And I will ask these, and you can answer them.

Is the President's plan to redeploy all 33,000 surge forces by next summer aggressive? What regional commands will these forces be drawn from? Does it put our recent security gains at risk? And does it risk the security and safety of our remaining forces?

Admiral MULLEN. Let me talk about, broadly, the approach.

Clearly, as you have said, Chairman, we have made significant gains over the course of the last 18 months and, really, since the President made the decision to put the surge forces in, and particularly in the south. And we are in the hold phase now and, in fact, moving into a phase where the Afghans have the lead.

So that was where we were, with respect to, literally, the most recent discussions and meetings with respect to what to do next, and we understand that. The south consciously has been the main effort. And it is that focus that has allowed us to achieve the gains we had.

Not insignificant when we debated this in 2009 was the very small chance that everybody—an awful lot of people gave us in terms of building the Afghan National Security Forces, because of the illiteracy challenge, because we didn't have a training infrastructure, because we didn't have noncommissioned officer [NCO] leaders, et cetera. The extraordinary progress that has been made with respect to setting up that infrastructure and fielding forces—Ms. Flournoy said over 100,000. I think it is about 120,000 forces that have been trained and fielded. Some 35,000 are in training literally this week. By the end of next year, we will have Afghan units that are manned at the NCO level to the 85 percent level across the board. So, extraordinary changes with respect to that.

And when we talk about whether gains are reversible and fragile, these gains can only be made irreversible by the Afghan National Security Forces and the Afghan people, in the end. So that is where this is headed, and we have made great progress with respect to that.

The secondary effort was the east. And I wouldn't describe it over the course of the last year as a holding action at all. And, in fact, what David Petraeus and others have done out there is reconfigure forces to deal with the challenges of that very rugged territory. And, in fact, it is not to take a lot of—the plan is not to take a lot of our forces and put them in the east. But it is, as Dave Petraeus says, it provides the jet stream between the safe havens in Pakistan for the Haqqani network, in particular, and getting to Kabul.

And Kabul, where roughly 20 percent of the Afghan population has been secured, Afghans are in the lead. And, obviously, you want to keep it that way, with respect to the capital of that country.

So what General Petraeus has done over the course of the last year is reconfigure those forces, look at an adjustment in literally strategy on the ground, if you will, to layer the forces in a way so that that jet stream is really cut off and it is made much more difficult on the enemy.

And there are layered forces from the border right through to Kabul which are now doing that. I am actually more confident in what we have with respect to the east than we had a year ago because I think we understand it. That doesn't mean it is not hugely challenging. It clearly is. But there was never an intent to do exactly in the east what we have done in the south with respect to our forces. And I think that all lies within this overall strategic approach.

All of us knew, going into this, that the surge forces were going to come out next year at some point in time. So the discussion about exactly when is obviously relevant but, in terms of numbers of months and getting through the fighting season, the end of September is almost all the way through the fighting season. There will be those that argue October is a pretty tough month. It is, but it is winding down in October.

So what we have is the vast majority of our forces for the next two fighting seasons, not unlike what I said in 2009. We put 10,000 Marines in Helmand in 2009. My position then was, if we didn't have a good handle on what was going on in 18 to 24 months based on what we were doing from a strategy standpoint as well as what has happened on the ground, then we would probably have to change our strategy.

I believe these decisions and our strategy gives us time to understand how good the Afghan security forces are going to be; how well the government actually stands up; how does President Karzai get at corruption; how well are we dealing with the risks associated with safe havens; and is there political space that this buys, where you can start reconciliation, move it from where it is right now in its beginning stages, where you can continue reintegration. And we have a couple thousand former Afghan Taliban—or, former Taliban who are now being reintegrated.

So, in essence, in ways, from my perspective, we are talking about the margins here, after a lot of progress, a good strategy, and continued focus in that direction. I think I would be remiss if I said publicly where these forces are going to come from, because I am not anxious to give up, you know, anything to the enemy in that regard. I would be happy to, you know, go through that with you.

But, most importantly, I think where the forces come from next year will depend on what happens this year. And that will be conditions-based, inside, obviously, the deadline set. And that General Petraeus and General Rodriguez and, obviously, their reliefs will make these determinations, given the mission that they have been given to carry out and, obviously, the direction from the President.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Would you term the redeployment for this summer "aggressive"?

Admiral MULLEN. Actually, not the words—as you know, we all have to choose our words very carefully. You used “significant” earlier.

I think it is well within reason for us to be able to do this. As I said in my opening statement, it was more aggressive and it has more risk than, you know, I was originally prepared to—than I recommended. That said, in totality, it is within the ability to sustain the mission, focus on the objectives, and execute.

The CHAIRMAN. I didn’t mean, when I asked where the forces would be withdrawn, to pinpoint locations.

I was referring to—and I am glad that you answered that the way you did. But what I was talking about, will they be coming from the fighting forces?

Admiral MULLEN. You know, “combat forces” is a term that has been broadened dramatically in these wars. I have been asked as recently as a couple days ago about, will they be the enablers? Enablers are every bit the combat force anybody else is in the classic sense. And so, in ways, are our support forces, because the threat is a 360-degree threat oftentimes.

So I can’t actually tell you, Chairman, where they are going to come from. I think, clearly, a commander on the ground is going to keep as much fighting power, whatever that means, given the situation, as he possibly can for as long as he can. And I am sure that General Petraeus and, if confirmed, General Allen will proceed in that direction. But I just don’t have the specifics yet.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You had mentioned in your opening remarks about the number of Afghan security forces that have been trained over the course of the last—I guess it is 18 months now since the surge began. I have heard the statistic, 100,000 in the Afghan Army. I know we also have made significant improvements in the police force.

I think one of the logical things that occurs to us, if we have that many more Afghan troops available, that much more Afghan security, how does that figure in and help us with this drawdown? How capable are they? How reliable are they? How can we move them in to take over some of the responsibilities?

Because, I mean, if we are adding 100,000 Afghan troops—I don’t know what the figure is on the police force—and this year, next 6 months, our plan is to draw down a total of 10,000 U.S. forces, it seems to me we are still in pretty good shape.

And one final little piece of that. The other NATO forces are going to be keeping roughly the same amount for the rest of this year, is my understanding. Can you confirm that and then comment on how the Afghan forces add into the mix?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, let me go to the second question first.

I mean, we were in both consultation and contact with our NATO allies over time. And they were obviously focused very much on what the United States was going to do, and any decisions that they were going to make were clearly going to be informed by this decision that the President has made.

That said—and I think it is worthy of focusing on—part of what the President focused on last night was the Lisbon summit, the

whole issue of transition, the number of heads of state and countries that are committed to this transition in 2014, which we think is about right—that is certainly the intent—and everything coming into this, as far as I know, Mr. Smith, I mean, the allies were very much with us.

They have specific decisions they have to make, and I don't know what—I don't know what those are. Certainly, I think as Secretary Flournoy pointed out, it is important for them to stay in this. Not lost on me over the totality of this is, 48 countries have committed combat forces here over time, which is a huge statement specifically in and of itself.

With respect to the ANSF, I think the number—and I can get it if it is wrong—for the army and the police is about 128,000 between the two. And, in fact, you know, 2 years ago, it was illiteracy, you know, it was essentially no training infrastructure. There was nothing that was set up except you recruited somebody on a Friday, and Monday they were on the street in a unit that wasn't well-led, didn't have senior leadership, senior or midgrade leadership, and hadn't had any training.

We have now set up 12—what we call 12 branch schools that have been set up. So this 35,000 that I mention—and the number has been between 25,000 and 35,000 in training for months. So it was a matter of setting up the infrastructure, many countries contributing to trainers. And we are about where we need to be with respect to trainers from all of these countries.

So there is now a system of training, which has produced a much more capable individual and what we see as a much more capable fighting force in the field. They are leading, in some cases, now. We are partnering with them throughout Afghanistan. And, over the course of the next year, that will increase exponentially.

I am not naive to think—you know, they have some challenges. They haven't done this before. We don't expect it to be magical. But in terms of the progress we have made over the course of the last 18 months or so, it really has been enormous. And we expect to continue on that pace and actually have it pick up. They will get better and be more and more in the lead.

Mr. SMITH. Yeah, the improvement in training over the course of the last 18 months I don't think can be overstated. Because, as you said, it is one thing to say we are going to pick someone up, turn them into a soldier, and send them out the door. It is another thing to actually have a trained force. And the surge wasn't just in our troops; it was in the totality of the effort—improving the training and also improving the governance.

The last time I was there, a few months back, you know, I have never seen so much activity on the State Department, Agriculture, Justice Department. We had USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development]. We had a comprehensive effort to improve the governance.

And I will just conclude by saying, you know, if we put 128,000 more Afghan security forces over the course of the last 18 months, I don't think it is fair to say that drawing down 10,000 U.S. troops this year and even another 23,000 next year significantly reduces our effort. I think, clearly, we have resourced this effort appropriately, and we are making progress.

And I certainly appreciate your leadership on that. It was a very tough fight, but the improvement that all of us have seen over the course of the last 18 months is truly remarkable and to be commended.

And, with that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you very much.

Thank you for your service and your testimony.

Four and a half years ago, I led a CODEL [congressional delegation] to China to talk about energy. I believe Mr. Larsen was on that CODEL with me. We were stunned when the Chinese began their discussion of energy by talking about post-oil. Oil is finite; of course there will be a post-oil world.

With our focus of the next election, which is never more than 2 years away, and the next quarterly report, which is always less than 3 months away, I have heard none of our leadership mention that there will be a post-oil world. This is a dominant factor in the Chinese planning. So, clearly, people in that part of the world have a different perspective of time and agenda than we do.

I am the Afghan Taliban; I am not constrained in my thinking about the next election, which is less than 2 years away, or the next quarterly report. What may seem to those Americans is a very long time, 3 years, to me in my planning it is little more than the blink of an eye. In just 3 years, they are going to be out of there. For the next 3 years, I am going to continue the fight as a diversion, but what I am really going to be doing is recruiting and re-constituting so that I am going to be ready when they are gone. I know they are working very hard to improve the security forces and the police. They are trying to make the mayor of Kabul look like the President of Afghanistan. But these gains are all very fragile and reversible. And with the forces that I am going to hold in reserve from this fight, they will be easily reversed when they are gone.

Do you think that we have the ability—you know, what one sees depends upon where one sits. Do you think that we have the ability to see the world through the prism of the Taliban?

Admiral MULLEN. We see that world a lot more clearly than we used to, Mr. Bartlett, as I am sure you can appreciate, because of the fights and because of the sacrifices.

We also see that world through the Afghan people's eyes, because we are in so many villages, subdistricts, and districts with them. And I just disagree that the gains are going to be easily reversed. In fact, I see a stream of intelligence routinely of the Taliban in significant disarray, at the leadership level, many of whom live in Pakistan, as well as in the field.

Mr. BARTLETT. Sir, I was just repeating what I am told by General Petraeus and others. And every testimony—read it in the Congressional Record—they sit where you are sitting, and they say, "The gains are fragile and reversible." I was simply repeating that.

Admiral MULLEN. Right. I have said that, as well.

What you also said, that they are easily reversible, I just disagree that that is the case. They only become irreversible if we get the Afghan security forces in charge of their own destiny. That is

the goal over the course of the next 3 years. Four years ago, they virtually had no Afghan security forces, certainly no effective forces.

That is the challenge. That is the path home. We all know that. And we see that through their eyes, as well as look at it through the Taliban's eyes.

The Taliban had a really bad year last year. They are having a really bad year this year. They are going to have another really bad next year. It is for them to decide how long they want to just sit on the side. And I certainly understand that. That is less—as far as I am concerned, that is more than just a blink in the eye, even in their eyes, and they have been fighting this for many years. They are also tired, and I see that routinely.

So I guess I come at it from a different position than how you see it. I certainly understand what you are saying, but we have just seen great progress. And there is an opportunity here to succeed against the objectives we have, which have been limited and get to a point where Afghanistan is in charge of their own destiny and we have a long-term relationship with that country that puts them in a position to be a lot more peaceful and stable than they have been in the last three to four decades.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Reyes.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here this morning.

I think, at least from my perspective—and this is after having a conversation with former Ambassador Khalilzad about the region in general and the challenges that we may face, given the decision that the President made.

And we were there; I was part of the trip with the chairman. And one of the anecdotes that stands out in my mind speaks to just the comments that you are making about the advances that we have made that some people categorize as “fragile.” But we were told about one of the soldiers that had been trained, was intending on being deployed, but what was significant about that was that his idea was, once he completed his term, was to go back to his village and work on the next generation in the context of literacy. We all know that is one of the big challenges that we have faced, is the rate of illiteracy in the general population.

So my question is, given the decision that has now been made in terms of starting the drawdown, one of the expectations that we have is that the civilian leadership will set the direction and that the Afghani National Security Forces are going to provide the security. So my question is for both of you. Is the civilian leadership at a point to where they can provide that direction, that oversight? And how are we—where are we and how are we are ensuring that both evolve at the same time?

Because we are also very troubled by the amount of corruption that exists, the control or lack of control that is exercised by the central government. So it seems to me that those are still questions out there that we need to take into account as we do the draw-down.

And then the last point is, we are being told that even once this is accomplished, just for the ANSF, the security forces, it is going to take somewhere between \$6 billion and \$8 billion a year to sustain them. The central government does not have that kind of—at least at this point, we don't have the expectation that they will have that kind of income. So where is that money coming from? How much and how long are we on the hook for? Either \$6 billion or \$8 billion or more if you take into account the civilian government, as well?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Thank you, Congressman.

We are certainly investing in developing Afghan governance and institutions as well as the ANSF.

The greatest progress we are seeing so far has really been from the bottom up, starting at the local and district level, moving to the provinces. I think I would say that something like 75 percent now of the district and provincial officials that are in place are now merit-based appointments. These are capable people who are qualified to do the jobs they are doing. And you are seeing a dramatic change at the local level, where most Afghans have their most direct experience with their government. So that is the good news.

I think, when you move to the national level, in terms of ministries that can provide basic services, an accountable justice system and dealing with corruption and so forth, we still—this is a work in progress, and there are many challenges that we still have to work through. But we are working through—we have partnerships with each of the major Afghan ministries, working with them to develop the capacity and go after corruption.

On your question about ANSF sustainability, we share your concern, the President shares your concern. We are currently working with the Afghans to scrub our long-term model for the ANSF to better understand, as the insurgency comes down, what will the needs of that force really be, how can we bring down the costs, do things in a way that gets us into a more sustainable range in terms of what the Afghans, together with the international community, can support over time.

Mr. REYES. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, you said in your statement that the commanders have flexibility inside the deadlines, which tells me there is no flexibility to extend the deadlines. And you also said in your statement that “the President’s decision was more aggressive and incurs more risk than I was originally prepared to accept.” Interesting choice of words, “prepared to accept,” to me. But what that tells me is, your best military advice was something other than and less aggressive withdrawals than what the President announced.

So I guess the first question that comes to my mind is, is there a military reason to have a mandated withdrawal in September rather than November or December?

Admiral MULLEN. Mr. Thornberry, what I said in my statement—and I will stick to that—is, I am not going to review my private military advice. We presented a range of options to the Presi-

dent. He has obviously chosen one based on his judgment, and we intend to carry that out.

I honestly believe that within both the numbers of troops and timelines, given that we will have the vast majority of our forces through these two fighting seasons, that we are on the margins here in terms of having an impact. And, as I said earlier, there is not a commander on the ground, there is not a military individual in the chain of command that wouldn't want more, longer. That is normal. But it is not my decision; it is for the President to decide.

And I would re-emphasize that inside that deadline—which is not flexible, I understand that—the commander on the ground—and the President has been very specific about this—has all the flexibility so he can move the forces where and when he wants to, as long as he meets those deadlines.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, as you referenced, there are other people who are concerned about the military effects of this. Now, as you know, there is speculation that politics plays a role in this timetable. I am trying to focus on the military aspects.

I am looking at today's New York Times, where Michael O'Hanlon talks about that if the troops have to be out in September, they are going to spend most of the summer on the downsizing effort rather than, arguably, where they should be spending most of their time, and that it is in the fighting season.

And it also quotes General Barno, who was the ground commander there in Afghanistan and is now affiliated with the Center for a New American Security, saying that the 10,000 by December is more than the military wanted but doable. But putting a September 2012 expiration tag on the rest of the surge raises real concerns. That is the middle of the fighting season.

Admiral MULLEN. Neither one of those guys are military guys. And I know them both. Barno commanded it years ago. And the focus from the perspective of the military leadership—Rodriguez, Petraeus, others, Mattis, and myself—and how we both recommended and integrated that—not integrated, but had discussions about this decision—certainly, we were focused on the military piece of this.

And, again, at the end, it increases the risk, but not substantially from my point of view, and that, you know, O'Hanlon's view that we are going to be focused on logistics is not, from my perspective—in a fighting season, we have to meet the deadline, but it is not going to divert the main effort.

Now, that is my view. He and I can differ on that. But I assure you that is the view coming from the commanders, as well.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, let me ask you one other thing. Some of my colleagues and I have just recently been there, focused on the village stability operations. It looks like one of the great successes that is spreading, but the key determinate is manpower. As you know, we are augmenting Special Forces with conventional forces now. Plans to expand them to a bunch more villages, but if the people aren't there, obviously that cannot happen.

So does this decision put at risk what seems to be one of the most promising things going on in Afghanistan to allow them to stand up and provide for their own security?

Admiral MULLEN. I agree with that. The Afghan local police and the village stability operations, which have been enormously successful, have stood up, I think as recently as this week, to a level of about 6,400 Afghans who are in this program. And, certainly, in discussions I have had with General Petraeus and others, there is no intent to slow that down and that this decision shouldn't do that.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I worry about that, but thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being before us.

I have a line of questioning from three different aspects because I think all three of these are very important for us to be able to leave Afghanistan and not have to return.

And, as you probably already know, I have been one of those people who have been saying, let's get out of this, because I can't seem to get—and you have been before us many times, and so has Secretary Gates and others. I haven't seemed to really get from any of you or from General Petraeus or the others what is the real end game and what it really looks like, other than stability and the Afghan people able to do this on their own.

So I think that is dependent on three things: education of the population, because we know that it is very undereducated; secondly, the leadership of that country; and, third, a strong Afghan Army/police force, whatever you want to call it.

So my first question is, when did we start training the Afghan—what year, I can't recall now, did we start training the Afghan Army and police? Secondly, how many have gone through our training or NATO's training or our allies' training program at this point?

Admiral MULLEN. I mean, I can speak to that, and certainly Secretary Flournoy, as well.

The exact year would be hard for me to pin down, but there has been a training effort almost as long as we have been there. My own personal experience is, it was well under way, although under-resourced, in 2006–2007. So it has been a number of years.

Ms. SANCHEZ. And how many would you say we have trained, who have gone through the training program that we have had or our allies have had, in total, during this time?

Admiral MULLEN. About 300,000—

Ms. SANCHEZ. 300,000.

Admiral MULLEN [continuing]. 302,000, 304,000.

Ms. SANCHEZ. So, currently, according to the information you gave that we have in front of us, we have 305,000, total, target end strength for this year of the ANSF.

Admiral MULLEN. Correct.

Ms. SANCHEZ. So there has been—so we have trained 300,000 and we still have 300,000? So nobody has gone away like in Iraq, where they walked away with arms, they walked away, they didn't come to the fight, they went back to their villages? You are saying we have 100 percent retention?

Admiral MULLEN. No, no, no, no. I am saying that we—certainly, we have had retention problems.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. But I asked you how many had we trained during the total time.

Admiral MULLEN. Oh, I couldn't—I would have to go——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. I would like to get that number——

Admiral MULLEN. Sure.

Ms. SANCHEZ [continuing]. When you get a chance.

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, ma'am.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay.

My second question comes to the whole issue of a corrupt government. And I start from the standpoint that the first time I met President Karzai, I told him I thought he was—I was reading a Newsweek article that had been written that day that called him the mayor of Kabul, and that is about it.

In my last visit there, his own parliamentarians said a type of election where he won a second term should never happen again in that country. Some were of his own party. So they don't even believe that was a good election.

So my question to you is, what are we doing about leadership there? What have we done to try to cultivate leadership? Who are we identifying? Or are we just leaving it up to these corrupt people to take advantage of their own country, as they currently are doing?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would just say what I mentioned before. We have worked bottom-up to systematically work with the Afghans to ensure first at the district level where Afghans experience government most directly, then at the provincial level, and then at the national level that we replace corrupt and incompetent leadership so that the Afghans replace them.

I think we are 75 percent of the way there at the district and provincial level. I think you are starting to see President Karzai, who is our partner in this effort——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Corrupt, I might add, but go on.

Secretary FLOURNOY [continuing]. Make the connection between corruption—the need to fight corruption to be able to gain and sustain legitimacy of government in the eyes of the people.

And one of the things that he has begun to do, with our support and encouragement, is start to make those replacements—so, you know, for example, dismissing a number of officers from the ANSF who he found to be corrupt. A lot of the work we are doing on the police, again, historically one of the most corrupt institutions in the country, the revetting, retraining, refueling of those units with a totally different philosophy about what their job is, in terms of serving the communities that they protect.

Those are all concrete efforts toward dealing with the corruption problem. That said, we certainly have a long way to go. And we are pressing our Afghan partners every day on this issue.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

I just would like to add to the record, I think when all is said and done about this effort of ours, we will find that a corrupt government is what really brought our efforts to naught there.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I would like to pick up on a line of questioning that Mr. Thornberry began with your statement that you made, both in writing and orally, where you said, "What I can tell you is the President's decisions are more aggressive and incur more risk than I was originally prepared to accept."

Risk to whom?

Admiral MULLEN. Risk to the overall mission.

Mr. FORBES. But not risk to—

Admiral MULLEN. Risk in the strategy.

Mr. FORBES [continuing]. Our troops?

Admiral MULLEN. Certainly, it has increased—I think it has increased risk across the board. But it is—

Mr. FORBES. The other thing—

Admiral MULLEN. But, Mr. Forbes, it is manageable risk. And we—

Mr. FORBES. I understand.

Admiral MULLEN [continuing]. Know where we stand.

Mr. FORBES. But, Admiral, I am taking your words that it is more risk. And let me ask you this question. I notice from your Web site that you state that you are the principal military advisor to the President and, as such, that you present the range of advice and opinions you have received, along with any individual comments from other members of the Joint Staff.

What is your role when you come before us? Is it to do the same thing, or is it to support the decisions of the administration?

Admiral MULLEN. It is—I think the Web site says "Joint Chiefs," not "Joint Staff," although—

Mr. FORBES. Joint Chiefs.

Admiral MULLEN. And it is certainly to provide my both assessment and advice, if you will, views, based on the questions that I get. It is typically—

Mr. FORBES. Is it the same role that you have to the President, to give us the same type of advice?

Admiral MULLEN. No, sir, it is not exactly—

Mr. FORBES. Okay. I looked through your testimony as you have appeared before both the Senate and the House during the administration's time. Can you tell us one time that you have, in any of your testimony, not supported the decision that the administration has made before any hearing?

Admiral MULLEN. I have worked for two Presidents, and I have supported those Presidents.

Mr. FORBES. So when we come here, we know that we are going to basically have the support of what decision was made.

My question, then, comes back to this: In May of this year, you said you think we will have a better picture of where to go in Afghanistan toward the end of the year. You then said on May 30th, "I think it is a very difficult fighting season right now. This is going to be a tough year." Then in June, I think you said, "We shouldn't let up on the gas too much, at least for the next months."

And my question to you today is, what has changed between that original acceptable risk that was risk to our troops as well as our

mission, that was not acceptable then, and today? Have you reassessed your position, and were you wrong when you thought it wasn't an acceptable risk? Or has there been something that has changed on the ground, something that has changed militarily, that makes that a more acceptable risk today?

Admiral MULLEN. What I have said for many months is, this is going to be—I go back up to what I said earlier—a very difficult year on the Taliban last year. It is going to be and continues to be a very difficult year with respect to the Taliban's goals this year.

And my recommendations and the risk that is out there is very focused on achieving those objectives. And while there is more risk, I don't consider it significant. And I don't consider it in any way, shape, or form putting the military in a position where it can't achieve its objectives.

Mr. FORBES. Were there any of the Joint Chiefs or any of the commanders on the ground that recommended this particular action that the President is taking?

Admiral MULLEN. Again, I'm not going to talk about individual recommendations.

Mr. FORBES. You know, Admiral, I will just close with this. It just astounds me that when we had "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," you were willing to come before a committee, unsolicited, and say, "I am willing to state my personal opinion, and this is what I think it should be," but yet, when we are talking about potential risk to the troops that this committee has to make, which is our number-one concern, that you are not willing to say what those individual commanders were willing to say or your personal recommendations.

And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Andrews.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, it is an honor to be in the process with someone whose integrity is as unimpeachable as yours, both in the quality of your advice and the strength of your character. And we thank you for it.

And, Madam Secretary, thank you, also, for your terrific contributions here.

Madam Secretary, I think you have succinctly stated our purpose in Afghanistan: that we ultimately leave behind an Afghanistan that will never again serve as a base for terrorist attacks on the United States and our allies.

I have always thought that Al Qaeda was the parasite and the Taliban was the host in Afghanistan. And our military mission, essentially, has been focused on destroying the parasite and either weakening the host or making the host unwilling to become the host for the parasite.

And I note that Admiral Mullen says, "We need to support an Afghan political process that includes reconciliation with the Taliban who break with Al Qaeda," which I think is a wise and understandable view.

So with that framework of what we are trying to accomplish, it is my understanding that when the administration took office, Madam Secretary, that we had about 34,000 troops in Afghanistan.

The surge built that up to 98,000. And when the present withdrawal plan is completed, we will be at 68,000. Is that correct?

Secretary FLOURNOY. That is correct.

Mr. ANDREWS. And, at present, there are 47,000 troops from allied countries that are in-country. What do we know about the plans of the allies to withdraw those 47,000? How many and when?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Well, I think, in the discussions we have had, I think they are—we have an in-together, out-together principle; a very strong sense of resolve right now in ISAF [International Security Assistance Force].

Mr. ANDREWS. Uh-huh.

Secretary FLOURNOY. And I think that, as we have talked about bringing down our surge forces, some of the allies are thinking about bringing down their surge contributions. But we should remember—

Mr. ANDREWS. Now, in that context—

Secretary FLOURNOY [continuing]. Many—

Mr. ANDREWS [continuing]. In that context—I am sorry—of security for Afghanistan, the target number of ANSF forces is 305,000, and, as of April, we were at 286,000. And the public reports indicate that, by about a three to one ratio, those units were deemed to be “effective” as opposed to “dependent.”

Let me ask you a question that is not a rhetorical question. Given the strengthening of the ANSF, the presence of allied troops that we don’t expect a precipitous drop in—we expect it to be somewhat on par with ours—what will the mission of the 68,000 remaining Americans be after September 30th of 2012? Why are they there?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think they are there to continue the implementation of the strategy on the road to successful transition, which will be completed—you know, at the end of 2014, we expect that Afghans will be fully in the lead across the country. We are on a glide slope toward that Lisbon goal. And this drawdown is totally consistent with that, and the strategy and the mission will keep aiming for that goal.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, Admiral or Madam Secretary, either of you can answer this. In terms that our constituents would understand and that we would understand, what will these 68,000 troops be doing in the country after September 30th of 2012? What will their mission be?

Admiral MULLEN. First of all, it will be to sustain the transition. But, specifically—and this is, from my perspective, a rock-solid principle from Iraq—it is the partnership piece. What we see in Iraq today and what we have seen throughout the shift in Iraq of our mission to the assist side is the enormity of the impact of partnership. And that is where we are, even now, focused with the Afghan security forces. And you talked about the ratio. And in 2 or 3 years from now, it will be much better than it is right now.

So that will be, if you will, a significant part of the main effort. But that doesn’t mean we won’t have forces still involved in combat to continue the gains, if you will.

Mr. ANDREWS. Admiral, when the day hopefully comes when the Afghan security forces are at their optimal point and can control

and defend their own country, what will the appropriate U.S. troop level be then?

Admiral MULLEN. It is indeterminate right now. I mean, dramatically reduced, clearly. The model is still Iraq. And then that gets into what is being worked right now in this strategic-partnership approach between Afghanistan and the United States. And what does it mean, long term, in terms of any kind of U.S. footprint, I just don't have the answer to that.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you very much, again, for your testimony and your integrity.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, Madam Secretary, thank you for being here today.

And, Admiral, I appreciate your testimony, bringing up the extraordinary progress by the American military, their service in Afghanistan. And I am just so grateful, too, for your reference to winning in Afghanistan. The American people need to know that progress is being made and we can win.

And, Madam Secretary, I appreciate you referencing how important it is that we do win and that we are successful in Afghanistan.

I wish the American people knew really the level of achievement, such as the security forces. And you have provided the information today, and I appreciate Congressman Andrews referencing it, too. And that is, at the end of this year, in the last 3 years, we will have doubled the number of Afghan police and army personnel up to 305,000 personnel—trained personnel. And General Bill Caldwell has certainly done extraordinary work. I had the privilege of visiting my former National Guard unit, the 218th Brigade, as they were training Afghan security forces. And I don't think they get the credit, our military or theirs, for the professionalism that is being created in that country.

With that said, I am very concerned about conditions on the ground. And for each of you, the President did not reference any conditions on the ground that would justify withdrawing 10,000 troops by December and an additional 23,000 next summer. Every witness before this committee has previously testified that any withdrawal would be conditions-based.

The first question: What specific conditions on the ground justify withdrawing 10,000 troops by December?

Admiral MULLEN. We are literally starting transition in seven districts next month, in this overall transition process which is agreed to by everybody—you know, it was the Lisbon agreement—certainly NATO and other countries who are contributing. So this is the beginning of that, very specifically. And the conditions on the ground in those provinces support that transition. That is the approach.

The other transition provinces, if you will—and it will, in great part, be tied to violence levels and tied to the ability of the Afghan security forces. And we get a lot of credit on the military side for the gains; there have been considerable gains on the diplomatic side. I mean, we have surged diplomatically over the course of the last 2 years extraordinary civilians who have also made a big difference.

So the idea is, in the various provinces to—or districts, if you will; sorry—to transition these as conditions allow. And inside the numbers and the dates that you specifically cited, Mr. Wilson, any movement, any changes that will be associated with where the troops come from are going to be conditions-based. There is just no question about that, that the President has given us that flexibility.

Mr. WILSON. And, certainly, looking at level of violence, the establishment of a civil society within those districts, what are the future conditions that are anticipated to merit the removal of 23,000 additional troops?

Admiral MULLEN. The improvement in the security conditions. I mean, the most representative example, clearly, is in the south, in Helmand and Kandahar specifically. It is actually—and we have enabled this, but we have allies fighting in the north and in the west. And in the north it is actually turning. It has not turned; I wouldn't say that. But it is turning. It is better than it was. And a year ago, there were grave predictions about losing the north because of what was going on there.

And we talked earlier today about the challenges in the east, and there are challenges there. But General Petraeus has a strategy that I have seen and believe in, in terms of being able to create the kind of conditions where we transition there, as well.

So we are committed to not transitioning until it is ready, and we are working our way through this with the Afghan security forces, who have dramatically improved in size and in quality. That doesn't mean we don't have retention problems and attrition problems, although they are, particularly in the police force, much better. And, in fact, on the attrition side for the police force, we exceed our objective—meaning, attrition is lower than it needs to be to sustain that force.

Mr. WILSON. As decisions are being made in terms of troop withdrawal, is it being considered, the effect on the morale of the Taliban and the extremists? Are we not giving false hope to them that they may prevail, that we don't have resolve, Madam Secretary?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I do not think that we are giving them any comfort. If I were a member of the Taliban and I am looking out, where will I be next year, 2 years more, 3 years more, I am going to control less territory; I am going to have less support from the population; I am going to face more forces in the field, and more and more of them Afghans who will be there for a very long time; I am going to have less access to finances; I am going to have more internal dissension and division and defection.

So, any way you slice it, things are getting worse for them, not better.

Mr. WILSON. And we will not abandon our allies?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Absolutely not.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here.

And, Admiral Mullen, I know you will continue to give your extraordinary attention to the issues in the next few months, as you have in all of your tenure. And I appreciate your leadership and your service.

We had a hearing yesterday, and I think the comment was made that the numbers are probably less important than how our troops are utilized or which troops, actually, would be leaving and, certainly, which troops would be staying.

Can you break that down a little bit more, in terms of support troops, in terms of combat troops, in terms of training troops, and whether or not that decision has been made?

I think just a follow-up question to that really is, when we think about the Afghan forces, how are they going to be sustained financially into the future? And how do we envision our help and support to them as we move forward?

Admiral MULLEN. With respect to the Afghan security forces and the bill that is associated with that, I think President Karzai and his people recognize that—and, certainly, we do from our side—that at the current level of \$6 billion to \$7 billion a year, you know, it is not sustainable.

And so there is a lot of work going on on both sides right now to figure out what is sustainable, what will be needed, and including a view that, do you need 352,000 in 2014 or 2015? And I don't know the answer to that.

But everybody recognizes that the current level, from a financial standpoint, it is not sustainable, and solutions have to be taken with respect to a way forward there.

And what was the first part? I am sorry.

Mrs. DAVIS. The way that the remaining troops—and, of course, there are large numbers; we are talking about 68,000—but in terms of breaking down with support troops versus combat troops, training?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I think the combat—in those three categories, were I a commander on the ground, I would be focused on the combat and training troops first, keeping them as long as we possibly could.

But I just don't discount the need for the kind of support troops, if you will. And I include in the first group the enablers, and that General Petraeus and General Rodriguez and their reliefs are going to have to determine the specifics.

And I think, on the 23,000, I think knowing exactly where they will come from, it is far too soon to know that, because that will be conditions-based, and the conditions are going to change between now and when they really have to focus on executing that.

I think in the near term, clearly, that General Petraeus and General Rodriguez had some expectation, obviously, there would be a withdrawal here over the course of this year and specifically what that might entail. And they have done a lot of that work. I have not seen it, although they will certainly come in in the near future with how to do that.

Mrs. DAVIS. Okay. Thank you.

If I could, I want to follow up on the reintegration, reconciliation issue. And we know, if we look around for success, I think a lot of that is defined by the number of young women that are in school,

girls that are in schools. I have had a chance to visit at those schools, as well as a number of the trips that we have taken for Mother's Day to visit with our troops but also to engage with women in villages as well as in leadership. A number of those women were here in the Capitol this last week.

What role are we really playing to make sure that it is not just a lot of rhetoric about the fact that they are important to the development of a civil society there? How are we moving forward to be certain that their voices are a meaningful voice in this process? And at what point would we consider that the reconciliation is not even working or moving forward? And what role would that play as we continue to look at troop withdrawal?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think that Secretary Clinton and many other members of the administration have consistently raised the issue of female participation in both the reintegration, community-based processes, but also the larger reconciliation process. And we have raised that issue with our Afghan interlocutors, continue to press the point.

I think you see a gradual expansion of women involvement in the High Peace Council, for example, involvement in more of the community-based oversight efforts that are emerging.

So, you know, when we talk about the key criteria that those who reconcile must meet and we talk about respecting the Afghan Constitution, the key element of that is respect for minority and women's rights. And that has been a key plank in our policy from the get-go. It is something we continue to try to translate into concrete improvements with our Afghan interlocutors. It is very important.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you both.

And, Admiral Mullen, I want to go back to a topic that I think goes to the heart, really, of what we see in the conflict in Afghanistan, which is the issue of opium production and the drugs that are fueling and funding the Taliban and other insurgent activities.

Frequently, when we have these hearings, I hold up this chart that is a Congressional Research Service bar chart that shows the opium production that has occurred during our time period and historically in Afghanistan. If you look at the chart, you can see that, in the 4 years of 2006 through 2009, opium production almost doubled. That is the time period when we saw that we needed to go in with the surge. The period beforehand, there was historical levels of opium production.

I have used this chart both with President Karzai and General Petraeus to raise the issue of, you know, we need to do more to lower the opium production and the narcotics trade. General James Jones said that he believes that these funds go directly to fund the Taliban, and he of course said that it also goes to fund the issues of corruption.

Now, when General Petraeus was here last time and I held up this chart, he kindly told me that there was new information as to what successes we have had, and he has sent me a new bar chart. And the new bar chart shows that, in 2010, there was a 48 percent

decrease as a result of our counternarcotics efforts; also, there was disease among the crops; but, also, that there has been a 341 percent increase in our nationwide drug seizures in Afghanistan, clearly showing that this was a result of the activities of increased focus.

Admiral, with our reduction in troops, my concern is that we are going to go back to a period where we take our eye off the ball and that we may again see a surge in narcotics. What assurances can you give us that, with the lower number of troops, we will be able to maintain a counternarcotics strategy to reduce opium production and the funding of the Taliban?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I think we will continue to certainly press on this issue.

You have looked—just showing the charts, you look at the levels over the years, and, in many ways, it is a way of life that isn't going to go away quickly. There have been considerable improvements, and we continue to keep pressure on that.

I mean, one of the challenges—and this is going on—obviously, it comes principally from Helmand—and the landscape, the dynamics are changing in Helmand. By no means is it gone. And the long term goal is obviously to produce a better way to provide for one's family than what has happened to date.

I think it actually happens over the long term based on the security environment and having, you know, profitable crops that are able to do that. But I don't think that is going to mean we are going to dry it up overnight.

The focus—a critical focus here on the Taliban is where they get their finances from, as it is for any terrorist organization. And certainly this is—and, over the years, this has varied. I have seen many estimates of how much money they actually get from it, but it is substantial. And we need to continue to focus on that, as well.

So, really, there is a near-term piece here, but there is a long-term piece. And from an overall strategy standpoint, my view would be that we would have the conditions in the south, in Helmand in particular, in a place where they couldn't sustain that kind of production over the long term.

Mr. TURNER. Admiral, I would like to yield the rest of my time to Joe Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

And, Admiral, a question—I want to conclude—in regard to conditions-based. The success of the surge, the ultimate reduction in violence, the development of a civil society, if in fact violence increases, if we are unable to promote a civil society, will the President change his course? Or is the timeline of withdrawal more important than conditions?

Admiral MULLEN. I think that is for the President to decide. But what I said earlier, Mr. Wilson, is—and I go back to mid-2009, we put 10,000 Marines in Helmand, and my view then was, if this isn't working within 18 to 24 months, we really need to reassess our strategy.

I think, from the standpoint of the next 18 to 24 months, given the transition—and it doesn't just include the military side here. Because the issues of corruption, the issues of governance, the

issues of Pakistan, those are all still significant, inherent risks in this overall strategy.

So I think, you know, certainly from my point of view, after a period of time, if it is not working, that a reassessment is in order. But that is not for me to decide.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Admiral Mullen. I appreciate your extraordinary service. It is not easy doing your job, and one of your toughest parts may be the patience you have to demonstrate in front of committees like this. So I appreciate your forbearance.

One of the most important factors, as you well know better than anyone, is the Pakistan reaction. And I assume that the Pakistan situation was taken into account when this decision was made?

Admiral MULLEN. It was.

Mr. COOPER. Uh-huh. What is that reaction?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I—you mean the Pakistan reaction or Pakistan itself?

Mr. COOPER. Pakistan's reaction to the decision to have a slight troop drawdown?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I actually haven't gotten it yet. I spoke with my Pakistani counterpart yesterday, as we made many contacts. And so, we agreed to talk in the near future after he is able to sort of absorb it.

I mean, from a standpoint of how Pakistan views the future—and it is consistent across their government—they see a stable, peaceful Afghanistan as a goal they, too, would like to be a result of this overall strategy. They live there. Seeing is believing. And, over time, exactly how they view this will be determined on how this works, I think, personally.

I also think that they are clearly going through, you know, a very difficult time right now. From a strategic standpoint, I and many others believe, including the President, that we have to sustain this relationship, as difficult as it is. This is a country who has a significant terrorist problem. It is a country whose economy is very weak. And it is a country with nuclear weapons that is in a very dangerous and strategically important part of the world.

I think, not just the United States, but the regional countries need to continue to focus on this, so that stability is something that is the output of all of what we do there, not just—not continued instability. Because I think the continued downward trend is dangerous for all of us, with respect to Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the region writ large.

Mr. COOPER. Well, I know it takes a great deal of patience and expertise to deal with folks like that. I find that my constituents don't usually realize that Pakistan has more people than Russia, for example.

Admiral MULLEN. Yeah. I mean, they are projected to have over 200 million here in the next 20 or 30 years and be the fourth- or fifth-largest nuclear power, if you consider weapons, I think the fourth, in roughly the same time frame.

Mr. COOPER. Uh-huh.

Admiral MULLEN. So it is not a country I—it is just a country I think we have to continue to engage with and be frank with.

And, at the same time, you know, I think we are paying the price in Afghanistan and Pakistan for walking away in 1989. And that is a model that just runs in my head 20 years from now, whoever is sitting here or sitting in your seat, we are having the same conversation, were we to walk away, except it is much more dangerous than it is right now.

Mr. COOPER. Increasingly, Pakistan has, itself, been the victim of terrorist attacks.

Admiral MULLEN. Correct.

Mr. COOPER. In Karachi, most recently, and other instances. So they have felt the wrath of the Taliban and the Haqqani network and other groups.

Admiral MULLEN. They have lost tens of thousands. They have lost, specifically, over 3,000 of their military. They have had tens of thousands wounded. They have sacrificed greatly for their own country. Sometimes that sacrifice gets lost.

And they have some enormous, enormous challenges. They have faced them. They will continue to face them. And I think we need to help them, not hurt them.

Mr. COOPER. Uh-huh. As you say, they are a reality that we are going to have to deal with regardless. And we might as well face up to that, and not push the problem to the side or ignore it.

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. COOPER. General Bing West wrote a book recently called "The Wrong War," talking about the war in Afghanistan. And he said that one of the chief problems is Hamid Karzai's unwillingness to let us police the gaps in the mountains, the valleys, and actually terminate flow of folks across those treacherous border regions along the Durand Line.

Is he mistaken? Is this something that we need to demand of President Karzai?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I go back to what General Petraeus and General Rodriguez have done over the course of the last year, particularly in the east, and that is where he is talking about it. And General Petraeus made the—along with General Rodriguez and General Campbell, who basically ran the campaign in the east for the last year, to refocus it, to layer it from the border at Pakistan to Kabul, and, in fact, to pull forces out of those very remote places, which none of us thought was strategically significant. That doesn't mean we didn't have bad guys out there; we do. But this layered approach to ensure that we could protect the capital and deal with the Haqqani, make it much more difficult on the Haqqani network, which is the one that flows most of the fighters in there, was a better strategy.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you. My time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, you are here during an interesting time. And, Secretary Flournoy, you have been back here month after month. And I just want to say thanks for both of your service. We don't always see

eye to eye on stuff, but you are out there out front, and you are doing what you believe is in the best interest of the Nation.

I haven't heard anybody talk about a strategy. You know, people ask what we think about the troop numbers. I have no idea what the troop numbers are supposed to be. I am not a military planner.

But I know what our troops are capable of, and I know that higher numbers are better for a big counterinsurgency operation. If we had 10 years and 300,000 troops, we could make Afghanistan into San Diego. It would be a nice place to go fly fishing and sheep hunting at. But we don't have 10 years; we don't have 300,000 people on the ground.

I haven't heard any talk about change in strategy to accompany the change in the troop numbers. How come? We are at the low-ball end——

Admiral MULLEN. Well, I mean, actually, the short answer is, the strategy hasn't changed.

Mr. HUNTER. We are at the low-ball end of the numbers that McChrystal asked for. So I don't——

Secretary FLOURNOY. Well, I think——

Mr. HUNTER [continuing]. Want to get wrapped up in the numbers game.

Admiral MULLEN. Yeah, but, I mean, McChrystal was talking about troops, this is 2 to 3 years ago. And it has just—it has changed, you know, it has changed dramatically on the ground since then. So, clearly, it is something we look at all the time.

You know, it is interesting in overall numbers, because, you know, I mean, I spend a lot of time looking at who is there and who is making a difference and who isn't. And, you know, we have a culture of putting a lot of numbers in; historically, we have, all of us.

We have learned a lot with respect to that. I was just in a meeting with General Odierno as recently as yesterday. We were talking about, you know, what we learned with respect to Iraq. And we had excess forces in Iraq just because we were moving them so fast.

So we literally take those lessons into account as we look at how we do this. And despite the pressure on numbers, that has also forced us to, not adjust our strategy, but look at how we focus this, prioritize, and still achieve success.

You talked about the military. I mean, it is an unbelievably innovative, creative, capable military that we have. And, again, I talked about, you know, more risk and quicker than I had originally anticipated. But it hasn't put me anywhere close to out of the risk envelope, if you will, of getting this done.

And, at some point in time, if it is not working, we are going to have to adjust the strategy. The strategy still is——

Mr. HUNTER. You don't think this——

Admiral MULLEN. The strategy still is, you know, a counterinsurgency focus, without any question, you know, properly resourced. And, you know, we could probably get into a debate about that. I think it is, given the mission and the objectives that we have right now and the progress that we have made.

If it is not working in a year or two, you know, my recommendation would be it needs to be reassessed.

Mr. HUNTER. We probably have different interpretations of counterinsurgency. I mean, it can be an all-encompassing thing, where you are building hospitals and schools, or it can be where you have village security operations which are working very, very well, little militias in each town. I mean, you obviously know what VSOs [Village Stability Operations] are.

Admiral MULLEN. Sure.

Mr. HUNTER. Those are working. Some things aren't working.

But you don't think that there is any need—so you are telling me there is no need for a relooking at the strategy as we draw down in the tens of thousands for the “clear, hold, build”?

Admiral MULLEN. It goes to—I will be very specific—it goes to, well, how are we going to handle the east? And the east is going to not be held by U.S. forces. It is going to be both denied across the border as well as held by Afghan forces.

Mr. HUNTER. But you are going to have to hold the south as you go east, or you are going to lose all the gains you have had in the south.

Admiral MULLEN. But it is——

Mr. HUNTER. So, a drawdown in troops and hold what we have, which has taken so many troops, and move east at the same time with fewer troops?

Admiral MULLEN. The intent, certainly, over the course of this transition is to hold and transition to Afghan security forces. And that is going to be the challenge. I mean, I am not here to say that is a done deal, because it isn't. But that is the strategy.

And within the resources that we see right now, we see it as executable. No one—not Petraeus, not Rodriguez, not anybody—has said that is not the case. Is it going to be hard? You bet it is going to be hard.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay.

Madam Flournoy.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I was just going to add, if you go back to the original six campaign objectives laid out in the West Point speech—reverse the Taliban's momentum; deny them access to population centers; disrupt them in areas outside of that; degrade them to levels manageable by the ANSF; build the ANSF capacity; and then build the capacity in selective areas of the Afghan Government—as we do that, we always anticipated——

Mr. HUNTER. We are successful now, kind of, on all of those things.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Correct. But as we do that, that success enables a shift of the effort more toward the Afghans as they stand up. It allows us to thin out our——

Mr. HUNTER. I was in Iraq. I understand how it works. Yeah, I mean——

Secretary FLOURNOY. And so, we have always anticipated that, with success, the strategy would require fewer resources on the coalition side and more on the Afghan side. And that is the path we are on.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Garamendi.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral and Under Secretary, thank you very much for your service. I know that you have worked long and hard on extraordinarily difficult challenges, and it is much appreciated.

I want to just confirm, I think I heard you say, Admiral Mullen, a moment ago that the mission remains a counterinsurgency mission. Is that correct?

Admiral MULLEN. That is correct. The strategy is a counterinsurgency strategy.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you. And that involves all that was just said just a moment ago, all of the "clear and hold" and all that goes with it. In other words, nation-building is very much a part of this.

Admiral MULLEN. You know, it isn't—from my perspective, it isn't very much a part of this. It is a counterinsurgency strategy focused on, as the Secretary just laid out, limited objectives, which is what it has been and is what the President talked about in his speech in 2009.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The notion of counterterrorism—that is, to focus on the terrorists, wherever they happen to be around the world—seems to be secondary to this mission in Afghanistan.

Admiral MULLEN. I think it is not secondary at all. It is integral, very much. And it has been. I have spoken about that before. That is also how it is being executed. And I just don't separate the two. It is part of it.

Secretary FLOURNOY. If I could just add, if you look at the region at large, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and you look at the progress that we have made in terms of focusing pressure on Al Qaeda senior leadership—the Osama bin Laden raid as the latest example—but that pressure continues. It is looking at them globally.

So there is, I would say, only an intensification of our focus on counterterrorism alongside a complementary counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Are all of the Taliban the same? That is, the Taliban in Herat, the Taliban in Kandahar, and so forth. Are they all the same? And do they have the same goal?

Secretary FLOURNOY. They are not all the same. This is a diverse, symbiotic network of groups that assist one another, that rely on one another, but do have overlapping but sometimes distinct goals.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Some would describe Afghanistan as a five- or six-sided civil war. Do you agree or disagree with that?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would disagree with that. I think what is happening right now in Afghanistan is really the emergence of a nation from 30 years of war and the rejection of the Taliban by the population and, with that, the reduction of the threat to us, because as the population rejects that movement and as they build their own national capacity, Afghanistan is less and less likely to become a safe haven for Al Qaeda and attacks against the United States and its allies.

Admiral MULLEN. Can I just add one thing to this?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Yes.

Admiral MULLEN. This border area that we have obviously focused on—and Al Qaeda receives the focus. And Ms. Flourney said "symbiotic." I have watched terrorist organizations over the last 3 or 4 years merge with each other, increase their horizon in terms

of objectives. So LET [Lakshar-e-Taiba], which is a local outfit in eastern Pakistan focused on India, is now in the west and now has transnational aspirations.

So terrorist organizations are also different, generally in support of each other. And in this place, this is the epicenter of terrorism in the world. And that is one of the reasons the focus on both Afghanistan and Pakistan is so important.

Mr. GARAMENDI. What is the cost of the strategy that you have described to us today—the cost in 2011, 2012, '13, '14?

Secretary FLOURNOY. If you look at the costs over time, what we do see happening is those costs actually coming down.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, let's be very specific. Surely, you have figured out what the cost of your strategy is.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Right. So, for 2011—

Mr. GARAMENDI. And could you please share that with us?

Secretary FLOURNOY [continuing]. The request for Afghanistan was \$43 billion—

Mr. GARAMENDI. I am sorry?

Secretary FLOURNOY [continuing]. In OCO [Overseas Contingency Operations]. So the request for Afghanistan—I am sorry?

Admiral MULLEN. No, it is—I mean, we are running right now at about \$10 billion a month.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Okay.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I'm sorry, that's obligation.

Admiral MULLEN. The 2011 request I think is for \$117 billion. The bill of this, we look at it coming down about \$30 billion or \$40 billion a year based on the strategy that is laid out.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And 2012 will be how much?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Less than \$120 billion for 2012. It was \$160 billion in 2011. So it is about a \$40 billion decline from 2011 to 2012.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Okay. Could you please give us those numbers?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Yeah, we can give you that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 69.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much.

Secretary FLOURNOY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Coffman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, Secretary Flournoy, thanks again for your service and dedication to this country.

Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, they are not absolutes. It is really more of a continuum. And how would you gauge the current strategy? Are we then shifting a little bit more to add more counterterrorism elements as we draw down forces? Or how would you state that, Admiral Mullen?

Admiral MULLEN. Again, I think where we are a year from now is going to be determined on how it goes this year. It is heavily focused on both, as we speak. I mean, the CT [counterterrorism] effort inside this counterinsurgency strategy is significant. And General Petraeus asked for and got more forces to do that.

So, will there be a different balance a year from now? Probably. How much, I think it is hard to say. And I think, again, what

forces the commander on the ground recommends taking out next year is going to be determined by what happens this year. And we are not even halfway through this fighting season, so it is really difficult to say exactly how it is going to look a year from now.

Mr. COFFMAN. Admiral Mullen, I think you stated, quote, "In a counterinsurgency, firepower is manpower," unquote. And can you drill down just a little bit on what does that mean?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, you have to have people out there engaged. The whole idea in a counterinsurgency is to focus on and protect the people—in this case, the Afghan people.

What is important in this—this goes back to the success of the build of the Afghan security forces. The army, for sure; the police, absolutely. And not unlike Iraq, the police lag the development here, although, you know, it is going better and better.

So, in the end, it is the protection of the people, security for the people. And there is going to be, in numbers, you know, a larger number of people focused on this in 2012 than focused in 2011, just because of the continued build of the forces. So it is not just U.S. manpower or coalition manpower; it is the totality of manpower.

And, in fact, to these VSOs that have gone so well—and they are small in number right now, 6,400, as I indicate—that is an enormously successful program, VSOs and Afghan local police. And we will continue to build that.

Mr. COFFMAN. Admiral Mullen, in the Lisbon conference, I believe the policy decision coming out of that was that we would transfer operational control to Afghan security forces by the end of 2014.

Can you just be more specific as to what that really will look like? Does that mean we will still have some boots on the ground then in support of Afghan security forces?

Admiral MULLEN. The model that certainly is very much in the front of our minds is Iraq. And we will, clearly, continue to have forces there. And the Lisbon commitment is to have Afghans in the lead, you know, throughout the country, every single district, by the end of 2014. And that is where we are headed. As much advise and assist and support as is necessary at that point.

But, I mean, what we have watched in terms of the both growth rate and learning rate, they are on a pretty good glide slope right now, in terms of ascendance to be able to do this, the Afghan security forces.

Mr. COFFMAN. Okay.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Critz.

Mr. CRITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My questions flow along the lines of what Mr. Wilson brought up earlier, and Ms. Davis, talking about the drawdown being determined by conditions on the ground, the movement toward the Afghan security forces, the Afghan National Police being able to take over security.

My concern comes from the future of this operation at an economic level. The Afghan security forces are taking over more geography, but are we creating a situation where we have created such

a large Afghan Army that the Afghan economy just will not be able to support that?

And I think we have to look at this, you know, if the crystal ball says that we will be drawn down to a condition sort of like what we have in Iraq right now by 2014, what is the dollar amount that the Afghan Government, the Afghan economy, is going to have to generate? And then how much of the U.S. support is still going to be there in a financial sense?

Secretary FLOURNOY. That is something we are looking at in great detail right now. One question is, once the insurgency is degraded, the level of threat is degraded, how big an army and police force do you really need? And it may well be smaller than what we have currently planned. They may be experiencing their own surge right now. Maybe they will settle at a lower level.

Secondly, we are working very hard with the Afghan Government on revenue generation, whether it is substantially increasing their border revenues, growing their economy, working with them on extractive industries to gain from their strategic mineral and mining resources.

But, ultimately, we do have to get this on a more sustainable footing, and it has to cost less than what is currently anticipated. But I think we are working through that now with lots of analysis and the Afghans.

And we do believe we can get there, but it is going to—but let me be clear, this is going to be a substantial assistance effort, not at the levels that are currently projected, but this is going to be—Afghanistan is going to require international development assistance for many, many years. It will remain one of the poorest countries in the world for quite some time.

Mr. CRITZ. Well, and, obviously, you have heard from this committee. I mean, the support from this committee for what our military personnel are doing is second to none. Because they are doing—I mean, besides being warfighters, they are educators, they are counselors, they are parents, and they are doing more than probably any military has ever had to do. So the support is very strong.

But, again, it just seems that we have developed a model that is just not sustainable. And, of course, then you look forward, and if you say a shrinking of the security forces, well, you know, we know it in this country; we call them “layoffs.” That means there are people not working. And, obviously, with an economy, the delta is so large.

You know, I am really very concerned about this, as are a lot of people, that we are setting ourselves up for either many decades of support just to maintain this or just something that is just not functional, come down the road.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Young.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Madam Secretary and Admiral Mullen, for being here today. I really appreciate your testimony.

You know, I want our troops to come home as soon as possible. Everyone here does. But notwithstanding your reassurances, Admiral Mullen, I am not yet comfortable that the decisions related to

this drawdown or future decisions related to our force posture in Afghanistan are, in fact, going to be primarily based upon conditions on the ground. So I hope to get comfortable with that.

One of the conditions on the ground, as I see it, that is very important as we consider our existing force posture and future force posture is, of course, the conditions on the ground in Pakistan, where there are elements, various extremist elements, including elements of the Taliban, that reside over there in a relatively safer haven than Afghanistan.

You acknowledged that yourself, Admiral, that the situation in Pakistan is a significant, inherent risk to our overall strategy. These elements, extremists laying in wait in Pakistan, threaten to create the very conditions, destabilizing conditions, that justify our presence in Afghanistan, regardless of our progress toward the six components of our overall strategy articulated in the President's West Point speech.

So my first question, laying that groundwork, is: Admiral Mullen, are you prepared to say that the conditions on the ground in Pakistan have improved to such an extent that the threat to the government in Afghanistan and to the people of Afghanistan by these extremists in Pakistan has diminished to a significant degree?

Admiral MULLEN. I think it is really important to remember that the, you know, core goal of the President's strategy was to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda. And Al Qaeda is very much on the ropes right now. I don't say that thinking it is over, because they still would like to kill as many of us as they possibly could, and they have aspirational goals to do that.

Secondly is to make sure that Afghanistan can't turn into fertile ground for Al Qaeda or another organization which would threaten us long term. And that is really what the Afghanistan piece of this is.

Mr. YOUNG. I am going to very rudely interject, which is a euphemism for "interrupt" here on the Hill.

But, all right, so we are trying to create conditions, of course, where Afghanistan can't become a safe haven. But it seems that Pakistan is a relatively safer haven already.

Admiral MULLEN. And that is where, first of all, targeting significant leaders in those other organizations, the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network, et cetera, with, in many cases, our Pakistani partners, which is problematic, is a part of this. And what the strategy is intended to do is buy space so that there can be political reconciliation across the board. That is not an insignificant—

Mr. YOUNG. All right, Admiral. So it seems that we are approaching Pakistan with a very limited sort of counterterrorist strategy, when we are implementing a counterinsurgency strategy over in Afghanistan. We have our UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], much reported, that are going after—

Admiral MULLEN. I think our—

Mr. YOUNG. Yes?

Admiral MULLEN. I think our approach with Pakistan has been to engage them, to try to partner with them, support them in training, so that they can deal with the threats which are both internal to them as well as external.

Now, that is a very, very difficult strategy and execution, just because of both the history, the lack of trust—we left them before—and, obviously, recent events.

Mr. YOUNG. Right. Okay.

So, Admiral, in your estimation, we can never send in enough American troops to Afghanistan to create conditions where the extremists across the border in Pakistan would not present a threat to the Afghans, conceivably a threat to the United States—

Admiral MULLEN. No, it has to change in Pakistan.

Mr. YOUNG. Right. So all of this depends upon the Pakistanis playing ball, if you will, to put it colloquially.

Admiral MULLEN. There is great risk in the strategy tied to Pakistan. There has been from the beginning.

Mr. YOUNG. Okay.

Now, finally, is our remaining presence on the ground in Afghanistan in part a hedge against, or a deterrent to, future efforts by these militants in Pakistan to use regions of that country as an unfettered training ground for their activities, or even a worse case scenario, to get control of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, perhaps through violent means?

Admiral MULLEN. I think, through Pakistani eyes, what you say, you know, they are very concerned about an unstable Afghanistan that could threaten them with a much larger force. That is why getting to some level of stability and peaceful outcome here is so important. And I believe, if we can, Pakistan will come to that.

Mr. YOUNG. So, as I assess whether we should keep troops there or not, we should in no way factor in the fact that our troops are playing a productive role in perhaps deterring those extremists—

Mr. SCOTT [presiding]. The gentleman's—

Mr. YOUNG [continuing]. Taking control of the nuclear arsenal.

Admiral MULLEN. Am I allowed to answer that?

Mr. YOUNG. Can he answer?

Mr. SCOTT. Admiral, if we could get that question on the record and get the answer for the committee, we would appreciate it.

Admiral MULLEN. Sure.

[The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, thank you for being here; Secretary Flournoy. Appreciate your service to our country and all that you are doing to keep America safe.

Admiral, let me just say that, you know, I am concerned that we are reaching a point of diminishing returns in Afghanistan. Clearly, the war has cost us billions of dollars and thousands of lives lost or wounded. I was mindful of that just this past Tuesday when I went out to Walter Reed to visit some of our wounded soldiers there.

At our Emerging Threats hearing yesterday on evolving terrorist threats, Dr. Sebastian Gorka of National Defense University noted that Al Qaeda no longer exists in Afghanistan in any reasonable number. Ultimately, clearly, we deployed to Afghanistan to eliminate Al Qaeda and deny the region as a source of terrorist activity there. Our troops clearly have performed the mission incredibly

well; Al Qaeda effectively is gone from Afghanistan. But, obviously, new terrorist threats are being cultivated in other trouble spots like Pakistan, Yemen, and North Africa.

Now, the President, in his strategy that he released last night, is going to bring home 33,000 troops by next summer.

My question is—and I know that you have talked about that the reason to leave that number there and not bring them home sooner is to ensure that we have enough troops to support another wave of heightened violence that accompanies the summer months in Afghanistan so that our claimed victories there won't be lost.

I have to say that I really remain unconvinced. As both a member of the Armed Services Committee and the House Intelligence Committee, I have transparency into both worlds. And I question, where are the gains that really have been made that would justify us keeping the additional 23,000 troops in there until next summer?

Can you further convince me? What is the real rationale for not bringing the 33,000 troops home by the end of this year? I know that my constituents are looking for that answer, and I need to have it, as well.

Admiral MULLEN. From a military standpoint, it is the focus on keeping the firepower, if you will, the manpower, there through the fighting season, and certainly by the end of September, it does that next year, and then, obviously, putting the commander in a position to make decisions about where he may or may not take troops from, first of all. Secondly, I get the Al Qaeda—no Al Qaeda or a very small number of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. That is not the case in Pakistan.

And I just never looked at this as a single-country approach. You can't, from my perspective, you can't do that. It is the region and part—you know, the other core objective, if you will, of this strategy is to make sure Afghanistan is stable enough so it can't return to where it was when Al Qaeda grew up there and struck us in the first place or some other outfit that would seek to do the same thing. There are growing numbers of those. So—and that is not—that is not where we are in Pakistan. That is where we are in Afghanistan.

Admittedly, Al Qaeda is not there in any kind of significant numbers. Al Qaeda, however, is very tightly wound with the Haqqani network, who continues to try to destabilize Afghanistan and take over that government. The Taliban's strategic goal is to still run the country. And I am hard-pressed to think that if the Taliban are still running the country or get back to that position, that they won't be the host, if you will, for organizations like Al Qaeda in the past.

So the focus, again, I think, is to have as much combat power there through this fighting season. We have talked about that and the importance of getting through—vastly through next fighting season as well and then move the troop—and that to me is the time to bring the surge troops out.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Let me try this from then another perspective. I had hoped, quite frankly, to hear that the President was going to be withdrawing more troops than what he has planned over the next—even the next year. Why are we not cutting our forces in half

by next summer? What is the margin of utility of having the extra 17,000 troops there between the 30,000 that the President wants to bring home by next summer and the number of—would achieve 50 percent, that extra 17,000 troops by the summer?

Admiral MULLEN. I think if we did what you just described, we undo all the gains that have occurred since he put the surge in simply. The strategy has absolutely no chance of succeeding were we to do that.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I know that my time has expired. I thank you both for your service. We, obviously, have still tough questions and tough roads ahead. But I appreciate the work that you are doing. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. Admiral, I had a couple of questions when I was down front.

I will be very brief so that we can move on to the other members. If you would, just my concern after being there a couple of weeks ago and talking to the soldiers, the generals, our intelligence community, you hit on this when Congressman Cooper was talking about Pakistan and that if we walked away now, we would be right back here in 20 years. I recognize that we weren't talking about—that we were talking about Pakistan at the time, if I am not mistaken. Is that—

Admiral MULLEN. I think, again, it goes to the regional approach. I wouldn't be so specific. I mean, we walked not just from Pakistan in 1990; we walked from Afghanistan in 1989.

Mr. SCOTT. Yes, sir. I think my concern—and if you would speak to this is, as you sit there as somebody that we rely on to help us make the decisions, and your statement was Al Qaeda is on their heels, and the Taliban is in check. And does that accurately reflect your statement, that Al Qaeda—

Admiral MULLEN. The Taliban is in check in the south. They are not in check in the east.

Mr. SCOTT. And so our concern and my concern is I hear that we have them on their heels with one group and in check, at least in certain regions, in others; why would we draw down until we had them in checkmate?

Admiral MULLEN. I think in the judgement that we can accept the risk associated with that drawdown, while still able to succeed in the overall strategy, based on the gains of the surge over the course of the last—since the President announced it 18 months ago.

Mr. SCOTT. My understanding is that Germany, France and Britain have all announced troop withdrawals somewhat simultaneous with ours, along a similar schedule as ours. Is that correct? That is what is reported in the news?

Secretary FLOURNOY. They are very, very modest, and they are not uniform at all. I would say they are more modest in general than what we have proposed. For the most part, our allies, the Australians, others, are saying we are in it. We are committed. We are signed up to the Lisbon plan, and that is what we are sticking with. And I haven't heard anybody walk away from what we all agreed at Lisbon.

Mr. SCOTT. Is it public what the total NATO force will be, U.S. and coalition forces? Or is that classified information and when those drawdowns are anticipated?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I don't think we have the particulars yet to be able to calculate where that will be a year from now. But we certainly release the numbers of where we are today. I don't think we have heard enough detail from our partners to know exactly where we will be at the end of the next summer. From what we have heard so far, there will not be dramatic increases or people departing the coalition. There is a lot of commitment to the strategy and making it succeed.

Mr. SCOTT. As we have that information, I would appreciate it if you would update me and the committee, because I do think it is important what the total force is as well as the U.S. force. I am going to yield the remainder of my time.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would be happy to do that.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 69.]

Mr. SCOTT. And we have got Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. Hanabusa.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Under Secretary and Admiral, for being here. My question, whichever one of you can answer it, is that I think the public is a bit confused about what 2014 represents. I think when people think of 2014, given the announcement of the numbers that we are withdrawing, that people are construing that as the date that, by the end of 2014, we would have withdrawn our troops.

But in reading both of your testimonies, 2014 is clearly being identified as the day that—or the time that Afghan—or Afghanistan takes over basically the whole military effort. So given that, what are the numbers that are anticipated?

And I think, Under Secretary, you made a statement that if peace is achieved, then the numbers that are currently planned may then be reduced. So I assume there is some understanding of where we are going to be in 2014. And what is that number in terms of our troops?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think by the end of 2014, we expect Afghans will be in the lead for security. We will be able to shift our mission focus more toward advise, assist, training, supporting them, continuing to partner with them on counterterrorism, intelligence and so forth. This is a lot of what we are flushing out in our discussions about an enduring strategic partnership.

The expectation is that the numbers will be substantially lower, but I don't think until we know what the state of the Taliban is, what the state of the threat, the state of the ANSF, it will be hard to predict exactly what those numbers will be.

But we can tell you they are going to be smaller; the mission set will become increasingly more focused on supporting and enabling the Afghans in the lead across the country.

Ms. HANABUSA. I saw an interesting chart on the news. For example, the number, what the troop strength was in 2008, and then after President Obama came into office. And it looked like almost a doubling of those numbers, if I remember it correctly. So we were like at 30-something thousand, if I am correct, and then we went up to 60-something thousand, and we are now up to 100-something thousand. So we are going to draw down 33,000 by the end of next year. And then the question becomes from that 70,000 that we

have left to what you are considering to be not as large or whatever it is, what does it look like in terms of where we are in relationship to those numbers?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Again, I think that we will continue on the curve toward 2014.

The thing that President Obama has said from the beginning of this strategy is that this administration will commit to periodically reviewing where we are; is the strategy working? Is it not? How do we adjust the alignment of resources to that strategy, and I would anticipate that regular process of review that we have demonstrated over the last 2 years will continue through this administration, certainly, and I would hope on through to 2014 and beyond.

Ms. HANABUSA. Under Secretary, if somebody who doesn't understand all of this wants to know in plain English, are we going to have troops in Afghanistan or are we not going to have troops in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, the answer is we are going to have troops in Afghanistan; we just don't know how many there are going to be?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I believe we will have troops with a different mission focus and at much reduced numbers supporting the Afghans who are going to be able to be leading their own security at that time.

Ms. HANABUSA. But Ms. Under Secretary, the bottom line is we are going to have troops with guns who are going to be in some way in harm's way, and I think that is what the people are really concerned about. So the bottom line, irrespective of what their mission or their objective may be, we are going to have men and women in uniform who are going to be potentially in jeopardy after 2014?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Again, I don't want to—that is not—the President has not decided on the character or numbers of our presence beyond 2014. I think it would be unwise for someone to try to do that at this point in time, given that a lot is going to happen between now and then.

I am just giving you my personal best judgment that there will still be a mission for the United States that will be in our interest to support continued counterterrorism operations, intelligence and supporting the Afghans as they take the lead for security in their own country.

Ms. HANABUSA. I understand all of that. The bottom-line question is very simple. If they are going to be in uniform and if they are going to be—they may be in potential of harm's way, unless they are somehow protected, which I don't see that happening, those who are in Afghanistan would still be men and women in uniform, and they still will have potential of being injured and potentially killed. Would that be a fair statement?

Secretary FLOURNOY. You know, again, I think that we anticipate a residual force, but I don't want to put words in the President's mouth, that he has not made decisions on the nature or composition or character of anything beyond what we have announced and beyond 2014.

Ms. HANABUSA. Thank you. My time is up.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Platts.

Mr. PLATTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, Madam Secretary, we are certainly grateful for both of you and your dedicated service and great leadership on a whole host of issues and especially our strategy in Afghanistan and appreciate your patience here today. I will try to be quick. I know it has been a long morning of questions.

I first associate myself with Mr. Cooper and his concerns and about the impact of what we are doing on Pakistan. I have had the privilege to visit our troops in Afghanistan eight times and will be back later this time for my ninth, as well as visits to Pakistan and the importance of them partnering with us and that we don't send the wrong message that they focus on the insurgents that they think are a threat to them versus a threat more to Afghanistan and to us, that they continue to partner with us.

So I think he raised those issues pretty well, and I appreciate your answers on his questions. Probably my overall main concern is, I have always said in Iraq and Afghanistan, facts on the ground guiding us, it was an important part of what the President said in December of 2009 when he laid out his plans for the surge, which I commended him for doing, and his hope to begin withdrawing this summer, but an important caveat was facts on the ground.

And so I understand where today the ability to say we are going to begin drawing up to 10,000 this year, based on the facts on the ground today. I am a little concerned that we will get ahead of ourselves and say, we already know what the facts on the ground are going to be next year so we can draw down another 23,000 rather than waiting to see what the facts actually are next year and not be premature. So that is certainly a concern I have.

The specific area of questions I want to address is the importance of training up the Afghan National Security Forces. And I visited with General Caldwell and think he and his team are doing an outstanding job and really have transformed that training mission in the last year, including the literacy aspect, which especially for the police, a key aspect of what they are doing.

Madam Secretary, you talked about the importance of them being trained up as part of the calculation in this drawdown that we are going to see. I guess, first, I assume you calculated that my understanding that we are still seeing about a 30 percent attrition level, desertions, that that was factored into the numbers, not just that we have this many being trained, but we are probably going to lose 30 percent of them. Is that an accurate assessment or assumption?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Yes. I think our expectations about both growth and quality are based on what we have experienced to date but also the progress that we are making on bringing some of the attrition down, bringing the retention up, improving the quality, but importantly, on performance in the field, particularly as more and more units are—almost all of the units in the south, southwest and so forth are partnered with ours, and we are able to get a very good sense of how these units are performing in the field.

Mr. PLATTS. And that relates to a follow-on question. And I guess a concern I have is that we are training them up through basics and then, because of the need, we are putting them right out there without the additional opportunity to kind of hone their skills, and

I think that leads to that 30 percent desertion or attrition rate. To counter that, we have to better—or continue to partner. The fact that there is going to be 33,000 fewer U.S. forces there to partner with, isn't that going to create somewhat of a challenge? How do we do that partnering with that many less U.S. forces for them to be partnered with?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think the details of how this affects partnering will be worked through, but I don't anticipate a significant shortfall in that regard. Part of what we are getting as we grow the force is more time to pull units out for retraining, more time to send leaders to further development. Admiral Mullen mentioned the specialty schools, that we are now developing the Afghan National Forces own enablers and specialists and so forth. So I think this is all of a piece, but I don't think anyone has assessed the drawdown to fundamentally put that effort at risk in any way.

Mr. PLATTS. I certainly hope not because probably the best training we give them is when they are out there in the field with the most professional, best qualified, best trained, most capable force in the world, that being the American soldier and marine, all of our personnel. And that is when we look at the numbers and not equate a newly trained Afghan National Security Force individual to our military because, obviously, there is a huge difference.

I come back to, as I run out of time, just that my hope is the administration, as we get to next year, with that 23,000 number, that if the facts on the ground are not what we hope they will be today come next year, that we don't go forward then with that drawdown if the facts don't justify it.

And a final comment, Mr. Chairman, is, Admiral Mullen, again, just what a record of service to this Nation. We as—I personally and my family, we are indebted to you and your family for your heroic service and wish you great success in all you do and thanks for what you have done for all of us.

I yield back.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The President just can't win on this one. It is going to have one side saying that you are withdrawing too many troops at a time when we need to have them stay the course, and then, on the other side, you are going to have folks saying, well, look, we are tired of war. Bring the troops home. Osama bin Laden has been neutralized. That ends it. Let's close the door over there, bring the troops home, and put all of the money into reducing our debt. So the President just cannot win.

There is another way, though. And first of all, Admiral Mullen and Secretary Flournoy, I appreciate you all being here today. I want everyone to remember that the President was clear in his 2008 campaign. He said that he would draw down U.S. forces from Iraq, and he pledged to refocus on the neglected war in Afghanistan. He has made good on both of those commitments. In the spring of 2009, we had 138,000 troops on the ground in Iraq. We now have 61,000 on the ground, with more leaving every day. And by the end of this year, we will have less than 130 Department of Defense boots on the ground in Iraq, unless there is some change in the security agreement.

With the addition of 30,000 troops and renewed focus on Afghanistan, we have been successful by all accounts. We have degraded insurgent groups. We have denied them territory, while neutralizing and disrupting transnational terrorists, who continue to threaten us and our allies.

The President has also made perfectly clear when he pledged additional forces to Afghanistan, the 30,000-person surge, 30,000-troop surge, that he would begin to return those troops home in July of this year. Last night, true to form, the President made good on that commitment; 10,000 troops by the end of this year, and over the next year, approximately 30,000 troops to return from Afghanistan.

Now, what would it look like if we left right now, if we just decided to close the book on this painful era in our history and just—let's close the book on it and let's get everybody out of there like we are doing in Iraq and just leave? What would the area look like, and what would the future look like for Americans? Could we be snug as a bug in the rug and think that we don't have to worry about what is being fermented in these ungoverned areas? What about Pakistan, a nuclear country right next door to India, a nuclear country, India having been the victim in the Mumbai attacks of a terrorist plot hatched in Afghan—in Pakistan, you know? What would we do if we left that area just totally destabilized by withdrawing our troops from Afghanistan?

I submit that it would not look pretty in the long term. We would end up having to recommit troops, probably a larger number and at a greater expense at a time when we would least be able to afford it. And so I regret that we are put into that kind of a situation, that that is the situation that we are in. I regret that, but that is where we are. And so what do we do from here? I think that the President has made the right decision. And I would want to bring every soldier home if I could right now today but it just would not be the responsible thing to do. And so I want to encourage the people to support the President. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Wittman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, Secretary Flournoy, thank you so much for joining us today.

Admiral Mullen, thank you for your service to our Nation and especially to that of your family. I know the sacrifice it takes to have a loved one serve this Nation, and we deeply appreciate that service and that sacrifice to our Nation. So we appreciate that.

I want to ask this. We have heard a lot about numbers. We have heard a lot about timelines. We have heard a lot about the generalities of what we have talked about, the COIN strategy and continuing along those same lines of effort while we are drawing down troops. It seems to me, though, that there is another element there that should be as concerning as the operations in Afghanistan and that is what is currently occurring in Pakistan. And my concern is that we can mount the greatest effort in Afghanistan, but if we don't have an equal effort in Pakistan, then we are going to not be successful I think in where we all want to be in the long run.

I know that not long ago, General Rodriguez said that even if the Pakistanis do nothing more than what they are doing today, that

we would be okay in Afghanistan. Let me ask this. In light of the current conditions in Pakistan with the relationship between Pakistan and the United States and with the current projection of force drawdown in Afghanistan, do you believe that we will still be in, as General Rodriguez says, in good shape with our operations in Afghanistan in our efforts to defeat the Taliban and ultimately displace Al Qaeda with the current situation in Pakistan ending with the proposed drawdown?

Admiral MULLEN. I think Pakistan's calculus will depend on how things go in Afghanistan. Not completely, but significantly. And while, at the same time, they are going through an incredibly difficult time right now, not just in the relationship with the United States, but also internally, particularly their military because of what they have been through. And I said before and I would just repeat, the entire chain of command of the United States through the President thinks it is important that we sustain this relationship, even through its most difficult times.

And I am actually heartened by the fact that we are going through a very difficult time, and in fact, the relationship is still there. I am just chastened by the past when we said, no, when the relationship was broken. So I think we all just have to be moderate, frank, careful about how we proceed in this relationship, particularly as they go through this introspection, if you will, about what has happened to them.

In the long run, I think it is the region; it is both countries. And I think the Pakistan piece of this is a very risky part of the overall strategy, which is why we have been engaged so long. But it is not just Afghanistan/Pakistan, because there is an India piece to this, nuclear armed countries, all of that, which gets to the point that should we walk away now, I just worry like—I worry a lot that we will be back, and it will be much more challenging than it even is now and much more dangerous.

Mr. WITTMAN. Secretary Flournoy.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would agree wholeheartedly, that we really have to look at this region in a very integrated manner, and we have to re-invest in the relationship with Pakistan to secure the cooperation we need from them on counterterrorism but also in helping to reach the goals of stability in Afghanistan.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask this then. Are either of you or both of you confident that we can get to the point where the relationship between Pakistan and the United States in relation to what we are dealing with in Afghanistan will get us to the point where their efforts will be on the level of where we believe they need to be. I know, having just travelled there, there were many concerns about their current level of effort, especially on many of the networks that we are dealing with, whether it is the Haqqani network, the Quetta Shura, whatever it may be, the concern is, we do our part on one side in Afghanistan, and there is safe harbor on the other side in Pakistan. Do you see—even in light of the difficult relationship that we have right now, do you see us being able to get to a point to have an active Pakistan government and army combatting the Taliban in their country in a way that helps us overall strategically in the region?

Secretary FLOURNOY. Yeah, I think Pakistan—as we succeed in Afghanistan, I think Pakistan will face some real strategic choices in terms of where do they want to end up when this comes to a successful conclusion. And I think the real question for them is what role will they play politically in helping to get to a political endgame in Afghanistan and with reconciliation and so forth. I think that is really where their key decisions will lie and that will ultimately have a huge impact, not only on their relationship with Afghanistan and what is on their border, but also in their relationship with us long term.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks for sticking around and helping us out to understand the President's announcement last night.

Admiral Mullen, in your statement you said we are going to continue to build a strategic partnership with Afghanistan, one based not on a military footprint, but on mutual friendship. And I think that we are—if there is something that was lacking in the President's speech last night was further defining what that relationship is going to look like.

I wrote a letter to you, Secretary Flournoy, a couple of weeks back on this very question about what this transition from, as I put it, from troops to trade as a shorthand does in fact look like? Because I think we need to maintain a substantial commitment to Afghanistan. But I think it is going to change and ought to change in nature. And I think most Americans want a change in nature. It is not just a matter of doing a drawdown. It is a matter of, what does it look like in the future?

And I would be very interested in hearing from you, Secretary, and then you, Admiral, about what that relationship does in fact look like, what does that strategic partnership with Afghanistan look like to send the message to Afghanistan that we are not leaving like we did in the 1980s and to the American people that we are not staying any longer militarily than we need to be?

Secretary FLOURNOY. I think that the strategic partnership between the United States and Afghanistan will have many, many dimensions. One is going to be a very sustained political and diplomatic engagement. I think there will be economic investment opportunities. The early days of that is already being seen in some sectors like the mining sector, the IT [information technology] sector, the telecommunications, agriculture and so forth.

I think there will be a security cooperation component that will be very important to continuing to press our shared counterterrorism interests and to continue to support the development of the Afghan National Security Forces over time. So I think it will be multidimensional. I think there will be people-to-people elements, educational elements and so forth. But the key message here is that even as we achieve our military goals and the military drawdown is made possible and Afghans do take—stand up and take more responsibility for their security, we are not going away in a relationship sense. We recognize we have vital interests in this region. We have—the objective of disrupting, dismantling and defeating Al Qaeda is one that is not going anywhere, and we are going to stick with this, and that means that we are going to stay with

the partnership in Afghanistan, even as the nature of the means by which we do this will change naturally over time.

Mr. LARSEN. Admiral, do you have anything to add?

Admiral MULLEN. Well, it is tied up into this whole idea of transition and focused, as the Secretary has pointed out, multisector. There are ongoing negotiations right now about the aegis of what this strategic agreement would look like from my perspective, and I am not involved in those. From my perspective, it is talking about the right things, the President of the United States and the president of Afghanistan are both committed to this. So that will be the framework for how this looks. And it is based on the assumption, obviously, that we get to a point in 2014 where we have a successful transition; they are in charge of their own security; obviously our footprint is dramatically reduced; and there is a commitment to sort of the long-term relationship. I sum that up in friendship, but a long-term relationship that sustains a level of stability in that part of the world so that it can grow, so that its economy can improve, so that people do have comfort in investing in it, and it has an impact, not just in Afghanistan but next door in Pakistan.

Mr. LARSEN. I think—honestly, I think the responsible and deliberate drawdown can be more deliberate and more responsible, meaning I think it can happen faster with more folks. But I just don't want us to think that—and I know you do not think this. But in talking to folks at home who say, well, get out of Afghanistan, the question I always try to push back on is, well, if we do that, what do we have left? Have you thought about that? Their answer is, well, no, we don't think about that.

Well, we need to be thinking about that; what does that look like in the future? I just want to be sure that you are all talking about what this looks like in the future, what model, you know, of which relationship we have with the current country is the Afghanistan-U.S. relationship going to look like?

Secretary FLOURNOY. We are actively discussing that with the Afghans, and as that matures, I am sure we will be coming back here to talk with you about that in more detail.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. We had a hard stop at 12:30. We have two more members with questions. I understand our witnesses have agreed to stay. I would ask the members to keep it brief, if possible, and thank you for agreeing to continue with us another 10 minutes.

Mr. Griffin.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Secretary and Admiral, thank you all for your service and thank you for being here. I know you have been here a while.

Just quickly, I want to ask you, looking at Afghanistan and the history of Afghanistan and its difficulty in establishing central control, a central—a strong central government, what changes have you seen over the past few years, if any, in terms of the people of Afghanistan willing to accept a strong central government and be a part of a one-nation state, if you will? Can you comment on that at all? Because I believe that the answer to that will—is directly related to our chances of success long term in Afghanistan.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I do think that Afghans increasingly do have a sense of common nationhood. But I think that the govern-

ment that—the level of government that matters to them most and where we see them investing greatly, participating greatly, holding people accountable is at the local district and then, by extension, provincial level. A lot of Afghans don't worry too much about what is happening in Kabul. They focus on, is my district governor listening to our priorities in my community, meeting my basic needs? Are the mechanisms or the instruments of government not preying upon me, not being predatory, not corrupt, et cetera?

So I think the first place we have to help them get it right is at that local district, provincial level. I think working on the national government, we are making progress in terms of capacity, countering corruption and so forth. But that is a project that is going to take quite some time. But in the meantime, the real stability is coming at the local level.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I would mention that I was in Afghanistan about 3 weeks ago and was able to visit not only some of the larger areas but some of the larger cities—but was able to go and observe firsthand some of the village stabilization operations with the Special Forces and was struck by the success that they have had at the local level and particularly the progress that has been made in the last, I guess, 18 months, couple of years.

So I was able to see that firsthand and I was able to actually be flown around in a C-130 from my district. And Mac Thornberry, who had scheduled the trip, assured me that he did not plant that Little Rock-based C-130 there for me, but we enjoyed it nonetheless. But thank you all for your time today. I appreciate it.

Mr. SCOTT. Does the gentleman yield back?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks for staying a few extra minutes. You know, I was struck listening to your testimony today.

Yesterday we actually had a hearing on an update on Iraq and the drawdown in Iraq. And again, it was actually amazing to hear the story of how we are going to be at about 157 military by the end of this year. And having sat through a number of those hearings going back to 2007, and Admiral Mullen, you know, has just done stellar service in terms of helping guide our country through that challenge.

Again, I guess first of all, I should tip my hat to you about the fact that what we heard yesterday was a real amazing accomplishment under your leadership, but also struck by the fact that when we had hearings on the SOFA agreement [Status of Forces Agreement], which really set the glide path down, frankly, there was angst in this committee about whether or not military advice was sort of being set aside and whether or not it was, you know, again, getting too far into a higher margin of risk, which you talked about.

And I guess, you know, this probably is going to be one of your final appearances before this committee, and I just wonder maybe if you want to share a little perspective about that experience. Obviously, you know, these are totally different, you know, parts of the world and conflicts. But certainly there should be some con-

fidence that we can draw about your success in that drawdown and what we are sort of contemplating here today.

Admiral MULLEN. What we have a tendency to forget is how bad it was in 2006–2007. We were in free fall, from the standpoint of our strategy, until the surge in Iraq, and there was certainly uncertainty whether even at the time that would work. It clearly did turn. A lot of that was external pressure from the standpoint of outside forces, but also a lot of it was internal.

It is a different country in so many ways, and we certainly understand that. But the overall model, certainly how we assisted them and how they developed their forces, *et cetera*, is one that we are trying to follow now. Different forces. This is from scratch in Afghanistan; it is a different country. I actually believe that, you know, there are—there will be limited—we focused in Afghanistan in a limited way on some of these ministries, finance, minister of interior, minister of defense, not across the whole government, central government of Afghanistan, if you will, and I think, the long run, this is a decentralized country. How do you make it flow and work? But that model is a very powerful model, from my perspective, of where we are.

And I guess the question earlier was, how many are going to be left? We don't know. Right now, it is 157. How many are going to be left in Afghanistan? It is 157 in Iraq, unless we reach some agreement to the contrary, based on what the leadership in both countries want to do. We want a strong partnership with Iraq for the future, for lots of reasons, and I think they are a little more evident now than even they were in 2006 and 2007, given the turmoil that is going on in that region. We seek the same kind of relationship, strong relationship with Afghanistan long term. So, in that regard, it is very instructive.

There are huge differences, and we have got to—we have got to take into consideration both the similarities and the differences and also acknowledge that in 2006–2007, we were in our fourth and fifth year of war, and now it is 5 years later. We are in our 10th, and that has got to be integrated into this overall decision as well, and I think the President has done that.

Mr. COURTNEY. And I guess, you know, the deadlines, you know, are always, (A), subject to some change, but they also help focus, not just our own government but other governments as well. And I hope that, you know, would also be one of the, you know, just general similarities that will help us get through this.

Admiral MULLEN. I think that is true. One of the things that happened with the President's speech in 2009, when he admit—when said he was going to start bringing troops out this July, which he has since made the decision on doing that and met that commitment, is it really did energize the Afghans. It sent a very strong message that this is not open-ended; you are going to have to get up and take care of yourself, which is what everybody believed anyway.

So there is—I have talked about the risks associated with this in one way, but there is another side of this that there is a potential upside where they know how serious we are. They have made a lot of progress. They are going to have to continue to improve,

from the president down to the local villages that we have talked about. And they have made a lot of improvements.

Mr. SCOTT. Madam Secretary, Admiral, if you have any closing comments, we will be happy to hear them now. I want to thank you again for staying past your stop time.

Secretary FLOURNOY. I would just like to say thank you for hosting us today. I think this dialogue is incredibly important to continue this throughout the mission.

I also want to thank this committee and the members here for supporting the members of our Armed Forces and their incredibly courageous work but also supporting this mission, which I believe is in the vital interest of the United States for us to succeed.

Thank you.

Admiral MULLEN. The committee has been incredible for years and years and years supporting our men and women and families, and words don't capture what you have done and the impact of it. And certainly as someone in my position, I just—I can't tell you how much we appreciate all that you do. And we will need that continued support in the future.

Mr. SCOTT. Admiral, we appreciate all of those warfighters and their families and all of those who support them, especially you right now. Thank you. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:39 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JUNE 23, 2011

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JUNE 23, 2011

**Opening Statement of Chairman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon
Committee on Armed Services**

**Recent Developments in Afghanistan and the Proposed
Drawdown of U.S. Forces**

June 23, 2011

Good morning. The House Armed Services Committee meets today to receive testimony on the President’s decision to withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of the year and the remaining 23,000 surge forces by next summer.

My position on the war effort has remained consistent. Afghanistan’s stability is vital to our national security. Any removal of forces should be based on conditions on the ground and consistent with the advice of our senior military leaders. Based on the President’s speech last night, it is not clear to me that his decision was based on either.

At West Point in 2009, the President committed to a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan by “surging” 33,000 troops. Every witness before this committee has testified that this strategy is beginning to bear fruit by seizing the momentum from the Taliban. Many Members have been to Afghanistan and seen this progress for themselves. Districts that were once Taliban strongholds are now being contested, and once contentious regions are being handed over to Afghan security forces. The Afghan national army and police are growing in number and *beginning* to develop the capabilities to secure their country. These gains are significant. We should guard them jealously.

I am deeply concerned, therefore, about the aggressive troop withdrawals proposed by President Obama. The President’s decision could jeopardize the hard-won gains our troops and allies have made over the past eighteen months, and potentially the safety of the remaining forces. This announcement also puts at risk a negotiated settlement with reconcilable elements of the Taliban who will now believe they can wait out the departure of U.S. forces and return to their strongholds.

Today I hope to hear more about the details underpinning the President’s plan—that we have allowed enough time to achieve success, that this drawdown is a military—not political—consideration, and that it does not put our remaining forces at risk. I’m interested not only in the number of forces the President plans to redeploy, but the location and composition of those forces. I am concerned that we will withdraw combat forces before they are able to cement recent gains, and that

areas which have been economy of force missions thus far will now never witness similar progress.

With the Taliban stumbling, we need a strategy designed to knock the enemy to the mat, not give them a breather. I wish I had heard the President forcefully renew his commitment to winning in Afghanistan. We need our Commander in Chief to remind the American people why this fight must be won and to reassure our military service members and their families that their sacrifices are not in vain.

Instead, I heard a campaign speech, short on details and confusing multiple theaters of operation that have little to do with a plan to succeed in Afghanistan.

I look forward to hearing more about how this plan will advance our shared national security interests. Thank you for your testimony.

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith
Committee on Armed Services
Recent Developments in Afghanistan and the Proposed Drawdown
of U.S. Forces**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, let me thank the witnesses for appearing here today and for all their hard work on this issue. You have both appeared before this committee many times on this issue, and we thank you for coming over here once again.

For almost ten years, we have invested substantial resources, in both money and lives, to address the significant national security threat we face in Afghanistan. As the President has stated, General Petraeus has stated, and our witnesses have stated at various times, the brave men and women who were deployed to Afghanistan as part of the surge have helped make real progress on the ground. I believe that this progress will allow us to begin to bring our troops home as quickly as we responsibly can.

The key word is responsibly. We cannot and should not continue to maintain a large number of troops in Afghanistan, but our withdrawal must be done in a way and at a pace to reinforce success and not undermine it. The insurgency is dwindling, but it is not fully defeated. Our success in killing Osama Bin Laden is a significant milestone in our progress, but it does not symbolize a complete victory over Al Qaeda. A precipitous withdrawal would jeopardize this progress. Doing so would limit the ability of our military personnel to safely perform their missions and hinder efforts to develop competent Afghan National Security Forces who can take responsibility for security operations.

Undoubtedly, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are weakened and their ability to threaten the United States has been dramatically reduced. The troop surge implemented over the last 18 months has made an enormous difference in driving down the strength of the Taliban and their allies and increasing the ability of the Afghan security forces. We must maintain the progress we have achieved as we move forward quickly and sensibly to reduce our commitments.

I hope our witnesses can help understand how we will cement this progress in place over time to ensure that Afghanistan is strong enough and stable enough to resist Al Qaeda and to not fall into another round of disastrous civil wars that provide sanctuary space to transnational terrorists and undermine our ability to pursue them. Do you envision, at the end of this drawdown glide path, an Afghanistan that can largely pay for its own government and security operations, or is the assumption that the United States will be providing \$10 billion or more per year? If negotiations with the Taliban are pursued and concluded, what will make the resulting agreements sustainable and enforceable? I hope you will help us with these important questions.

Again, I would like to take the opportunity to applaud the President for announcing a reasonable and responsible reduction in troops. As much as I would like to see all of our troops come home now, I believe we would be doing our nation a disservice if we pulled back too quickly and allowed the Taliban to reestablish itself. The strategy the President laid out represents a reasonable path forward and I will continue to press the President in the months to come to further reduce our troop presence as rapidly as we responsibly can.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

**Opening Statement
Adm. Mike Mullen
House Armed Services Committee
Hearing on Afghanistan Troop Withdrawals
23 June 2011**

Good morning. Mr. Chairman, Representative Smith, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you the President's decisions regarding the beginning of our drawdown in Afghanistan and our continued transfer of responsibilities to Afghan National Security Forces.

Let me start by saying that I support the President's decisions, as do Generals Mattis and Petraeus. We were given voice in this process. We offered our views -- freely and without hesitation -- and they were heard. As has been the case throughout the development and execution of the Afghanistan strategy, the Commander-in-Chief presided over an inclusive and comprehensive discussion about what to do next.

I am grateful for that. And I can tell you that foremost on everyone's mind throughout the discussion was preserving the success our troops and their civilian counterparts have achieved thus far. We believed back when the strategy was established in December of 2009 that it would be about now, this summer, before we could determine whether or not we had it right -- whether the resources were enough and the counter-insurgency focus was appropriate.

Well, now we know. We did have it right. The strategy is working. Al Qaeda is on their heels, and the Taliban's momentum in the south has been checked. We have made extraordinary progress against the mission we have been assigned, and are, therefore, now in a position to begin a responsible transition out of Afghanistan.

We will, as the President has ordered, withdraw 10,000 American troops by the end of this year and complete the withdrawal of the remaining 23,000 surge troops by the end of next summer. General Petraeus and his successor will be given the flexibility -- inside these deadlines -- to determine the pace of this withdrawal, and the rearrangement of remaining forces inside the country. There is no jumping ship here. Quite the contrary. We will have at our disposal the great bulk of the surge forces through this -- and most of the next -- fighting season.

And I am comfortable that conditions on the ground will dominate -- as they have dominated -- future decisions about our force posture in Afghanistan. Let me be candid, however. No commander ever wants to sacrifice fighting power in the middle of a war. And no decision to demand that sacrifice is ever without risk.

This is particularly true in a counterinsurgency, where success is achieved not solely by technological prowess or conventional superiority, but by the wit and the wisdom of our people as they pursue terrorists and engage the local populace on a daily basis. In a counterinsurgency, firepower is manpower.

I would prefer not to discuss the specifics of the private advice I rendered with respect to these decisions. As I said, I support them. What I can tell you is, the President's decisions are more aggressive and incur more risk than I was originally prepared to accept.

More force for more time is, without doubt, the safer course. But that does not necessarily make it the best course. Only the President, in the end, can really determine the acceptable level of risk we must take. I believe he has done so.

The truth is, we would have run other kinds of risks by keeping more forces in Afghanistan longer. We would have made it easier for the Karzai administration to increase their dependency on us. We would have denied the Afghan Security Forces, who have grown in capability, opportunities to further exercise that capability and to lead. We would have signaled to the enemy and to our regional partners that the Taliban still possessed strength enough to warrant the full measure of our presence. They do not.

We would have also continued to limit our own freedom of action there and in other places around the world. Globally, the President's decisions allow us to reset our forces more quickly, as well as to reduce the not inconsiderable cost of deploying those forces.

In sum, we have earned this opportunity. Though not without risk, it is also not without its rewards. And so, we will take that risk, and we will reap those rewards. The war in Afghanistan will enter a new phase, and we will continue to fight it. And we will continue to need the assistance, persistence and expertise of our allies and partners.

The President said it well last night: huge challenges remain. This is the beginning -- not the end -- of our effort to wind down this war. No one in uniform is under any illusion that there will not be more violence, more casualties, more struggles or more challenges as we continue to accomplish the mission there.

We know that the progress we have made, though considerable, can still be reversed without our constant leadership, the contributions of our partners and regional nations, or a more concerted effort by the Afghan government to address corruption in their ranks and deliver basic goods and services to their people.

But the strategy remains the right one. This transition and the concurrent focus on developing the Afghan National Security Forces was always a part of that strategy. In fact, if you consider the continued growth in the ANSF, the Taliban could well face more combined force -- in terms of manpower -- in 2012 than they did this year, and capable enough if the ANSF has strong leadership and continued outside support.

Going forward, we also know we need to support an Afghan political process that includes reconciliation with Taliban who break with al Qaeda, renounce violence and accept the Afghan constitution. And we know we need to continue building a strategic partnership with Afghanistan -- one based not on military footprint but on mutual friendship. Our troop presence will diminish, as it should, but the partnership between our two nations will and must endure.

That is, ultimately, the way we win in Afghanistan -- not by how much we do, but by how much they do for themselves and for their country. Not by how much our respective soldiers fight, but by how much our statesmen lead.

Thank you. I stand ready to take your questions.



United States Navy Biography

Admiral Mike Mullen Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff

Admiral Mullen was sworn in as the 17th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 2007. He serves as the principal military advisor to the president, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council.

A native of Los Angeles, he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968.

He commanded three ships: the gasoline tanker USS Noxubee (AOG 56), the guided missile destroyer USS Goldsborough (DDG 20) and the guided missile cruiser USS Yorktown (CG 48).

As a flag officer, Mullen commanded Cruiser-Destroyer Group 2, the George Washington Battle Group and the U.S. 2nd Fleet/NATO Striking Fleet Atlantic.



Ashore he has served in leadership positions at the Naval Academy, in the Navy's Bureau of Personnel, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and on the Navy Staff. He was the 32nd Vice Chief of Naval Operations from August 2003 to October 2004.

His last operational assignment was as commander, NATO Joint Force Command Naples/Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe. Mullen is a graduate of the Advanced Management Program at the Harvard Business School and earned a Master of Science degree in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Prior to becoming chairman, Mullen served as the 28th Chief of Naval Operations.

HASC Members' Briefing on Afghanistan/Pakistan

**Opening Remarks
for
Under Secretary Flournoy**

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Mr. Chairman (Rep. Buck McKeon, R-California); Ranking Member Smith (Adam Smith, D-Washington); and distinguished Members of the Committee.

Thank you for inviting us here to update you on Afghanistan.

As you know, in his December 2009 speech at West Point, President Obama announced a surge of 30,000 U.S. troops, with the clear objectives of seizing the initiative from the Taliban and reversing the momentum on the ground.

At that time, the President specified that the surge would not be open-ended, and that he would begin to reduce U.S. surge forces beginning in July 2011.

Last night, true to his word, President Obama announced to the American people that the United States is beginning a deliberate, responsible drawdown of our surge forces from Afghanistan. An initial drawdown of 10,000 troops will occur over the course of this year, with a further drawdown of the remainder of the surge by the end of summer 2012. Secretary Gates believes that this decision provides our commanders with the right mix of flexibility, resources, and time to continue building on our progress on the ground.

Even after the recovery of the surge forces, totaling 33,000 troops, we will still have about 68,000 U.S. service members in Afghanistan. That's more than twice the number as when President Obama took office. Clearly, this is not a "rush to the exits" that will jeopardize our security gains.

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More importantly, at the end of summer 2012, when all of the surge forces are out, there will actually be more Afghan and Coalition forces in the fight than there are today.

That's because by the time we complete our drawdown, the Afghan National Security Forces will have added another 55,400 members, not including the Afghan Local Police.

The growth in the quantity and quality of the ANSF – which have fielded more than 100,000 additional forces over the past 18 months – is one of the critical conditions that is enabling the drawdown of U.S. surge forces.

More broadly, our strategy in Afghanistan is working as designed: The momentum has shifted to Coalition & Afghan forces, and together we have degraded the Taliban's capability and achieved significant security gains, especially in the Taliban's heartland in the south. These security gains are enabling key political initiatives to make progress. We have begun a transition process that will ultimately put Afghans in the lead for security nationwide by 2014. We are beginning to see reintegration and reconciliation processes gain traction, and we are discussing a strategic partnership with the Afghans to signal our enduring commitment to the Afghan people and to regional

peace and stability. Together, these initiatives promise a future Afghanistan that is stable, peaceful and secure.

I want to emphasize that this announcement in no way marks a change in American policy or strategy in Afghanistan. It is wholly consistent with the goals that President Obama and our allies agreed to at the NATO Lisbon Summit last year. At Lisbon, we committed to the gradual transfer of security leadership to the Afghans by the end of 2014 and to an enduring commitment to security partnership with Afghanistan to ensure that we never repeat the mistake of simply abandoning that nation to its fate and risking the reestablishment of an al Qaeda safe haven there.

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I want to emphasize that although our progress in Afghanistan has been substantial and our strategy is on track, some significant challenges remain.

In the months ahead, we will be confronted by an enemy that will try to regain the momentum and territory that it has lost to Afghan and Coalition forces.

However, that enemy will face an Afghan population that is increasingly experiencing the benefits of security and self-governance. Those benefits will only become clearer as we begin the transition to full Afghan security responsibility in selected areas. Those communities will provide useful lessons on security and governance – as well as a potential model for other parts of the country.

Finally, let me emphasize how crucial it is for us to maintain a continuing role for our Coalition partners in Afghanistan – 48 countries with some 47,000 troops. These partner nations have made significant contributions and significant sacrifices. Even as we recognize the progress that we and our partners have made toward our shared goal of destroying terrorist safe havens, we must sustain this partnership to ensure that we ultimately leave behind an Afghanistan that will never again serve as a base for terrorist attacks on the United States and our allies.

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Thank you, Distinguished Members of the Committee. That concludes my prepared remarks. ###



Michèle Flournoy
Under Secretary of Defense for
Policy



Michèle Flournoy was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on February 9, 2009. She serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy and the integration and oversight of DoD policy and plans to achieve national security objectives.

Prior to her confirmation, Ms. Flournoy was appointed President of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in January 2007. Before co-founding CNAS, she was a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, where she worked on a broad range of defense policy and international security issues.

Ms. Flournoy previously served as a distinguished research professor at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University (NDU), where she founded and led the university's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) working group, which was chartered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop intellectual capital in preparation for the Department of Defense's 2001 QDR.



Prior to joining NDU, Ms. Flournoy was dual-hatted as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Threat Reduction and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy. In that capacity, she oversaw three Policy offices in the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Strategy; Requirements, Plans and Counterproliferation; and Russia, Ukraine and Eurasian Affairs.

Ms. Flournoy was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service in 1996, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service in 1998 and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award in 2000. She is a former member of the Defense Policy Board and the Defense Science Board Task Force on Transformation.

Ms. Flournoy earned a bachelor's degree in social studies from Harvard University and a master's degree in international relations from Balliol College, Oxford University, where she was a Newton-Tatum scholar.

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

JUNE 23, 2011

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SANCHEZ

Admiral MULLEN. The United States started training the Afghan National Army in May 2002. The United States Department of State contracted with DynCorp International in May 2003 to conduct police training. At the time, Germany still had lead responsibility for Afghan National Police development. In July 2005, the United States assumed responsibility for training and equipping the Afghan National Police. The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) was created in May 2006. The NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) was created on 21 November 2009. Though two separate organizations with a common goal and combined staffs of U.S. and Coalition partners, the Commander, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) is also the Commander, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan.

Since the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) was established on 21 November 2009; 190,184 members of the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) have graduated from training courses (as of 20 July 2011). As of June 2011, there were 301,672 members of the Afghan National Security Force (171,050 members of the Afghan National Army (this figure includes the Afghan Air Force), and 130,622 members of the Afghan National Police). [See page 17.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Secretary FLOURNOY. In response to your question about the total NATO force, including both U.S. and non-U.S. Coalition personnel, serving in Afghanistan, as of May 16, 2011, 132,305 Coalition military personnel were serving under NATO command. If you subtract the number of U.S. military personnel serving under NATO command, the total non-U.S. Coalition contribution was 42,305, or an increase of nearly 10,000 non-U.S. Coalition forces since President Obama announced the U.S. surge at West Point in December 2009.

ISAF routinely publishes a "placemat" on its website with the total number countries and military personnel participating in the Coalition in Afghanistan. That website can be found at <http://www.isaf.nato.int/isaf-placemat-archives.html>, and the placemats are updated monthly. Attached is the May 16, 2011 placemat referenced above. [See page 38.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GARAMENDI

Secretary FLOURNOY. The following table provides Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) amounts for the Department of Defense for FY 2011 and FY 2012. The amounts for OEF mostly support activities in Afghanistan.

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)

(Dollars in Billions)

	FY 2011 Enacted	FY 2012 PB Request	FY 2013	FY 2014
OEF	110.0	107.0	TBD	—

The President's recent announcement of troop drawdown from Afghanistan will change the Department's FY 2012 Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) budget requirements for OEF (Operation New Dawn for Iraq remains the same), but the exact change will depend on the Commanders' determination of the pace of the drawdown and/or adjustment of the forces mix.

The Department is in the process of reformulating its OCO requirements for OEF for FY 2012, and developing its OCO funding requirements for FY 2013.

The DoD OCO budget is a bottom-up budget preparation each year, and it is configured to support current military strategy, to include troop redeployments, and Commander needs on the ground. At this time, the Department does not have the information necessary to predict its FY 2014 OCO requirements, but it is reasonable to expect that the President's announcement of troop withdrawals from Afghanistan will result in a decrease in OCO requirements for OEF over time. [See page 31.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

JUNE 23, 2011

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GARAMENDI

Mr. GARAMENDI. You referred to the region where we are fighting as the “epi-center of terrorism in the world,” noting that this is why “the focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan is so important.” Do you believe the terrorist threat is greater in Afghanistan or in Yemen? To your understanding, are there more Al Qaeda members in Afghanistan or in Yemen?

Admiral MULLEN. We judge Al Qaeda does not have the capability to conduct a transnational attack from Afghanistan but continues to support the insurgency by sending mid-level leaders and operatives into Afghanistan. Al Qaeda’s leadership and transnational capability is based in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. However, the group is likely attempting to further develop permissive operating areas in Afghanistan into future safehavens from which a small Al Qaeda presence could establish limited transnational attack capabilities. We judge the sustained counterterrorism pressure in Pakistan against Al Qaeda makes it more difficult for the group to operate than their counterparts in Yemen. The Pakistan-based Al Qaeda leadership continues to lead the larger Al Qaeda movement as well as maintain the capability to conduct less-sophisticated transnational attacks from the group’s safehaven in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Counterterrorism pressure in Pakistan has significantly degraded Al Qaeda’s ability to operate—including planning and executing transnational plots—whereas Al Qaeda’s regional affiliate in Yemen, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), poses a growing transnational threat. AQAP members, operating under significantly less counterterrorism pressure in Yemen, are likely more capable of planning and executing spectacular but smaller scale transnational attacks than their counterparts based in Pakistan, as demonstrated by AQAP’s directed 2009 Christmas Day bomber and 2010 parcel bomb plot. AQAP has a larger presence in Yemen than the total number of core Al Qaeda members in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, a smaller proportion of AQAP members are focused on supporting transnational attacks; conversely Al Qaeda senior leaders maintain the intent to orchestrate transnational attacks from the Afghanistan and Pakistan region.

We expect the conflict in Afghanistan to continue to draw foreign fighters from around the world, some of whom, through their contact with terrorist networks in the region, likely will be redirected or inspired to conduct transnational terrorist attacks. The majority of these foreign fighters will travel to the FATA to join a larger interconnected network of terrorists, including members of groups such as Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB), and Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LT) before traveling into Afghanistan. We assess these groups are under significantly less counterterrorism pressure than Al Qaeda. Foreign fighters with Afghan battlefield experience and exposure to these groups are likely to participate in transnational terrorist attacks. As the Western presence in Afghanistan decreases, however, the appeal of the jihad in Yemen to foreign extremists will likely increase. We are following a trend of operatives increasingly choosing to join Al Qaeda’s presence in Yemen and we assess western recruits or others can be diverted to AQAP’s transnational operations program.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Counterterrorism experts suggest that the most likely terrorist threat may be “homegrown,” as we see an increase in Al Qaeda followers in the United States. Do you think our presence in Afghanistan decreases the homegrown terrorist threat? Might it exacerbate that threat?

Admiral MULLEN. [The information is for official use only and is retained in the committee files.]

Mr. GARAMENDI. Do you believe that maintaining anywhere from 100,000 to 68,000 troops in Afghanistan over the next three years is the most efficient and/or effective way to address the threat of international terrorism? If so, why? Are there other strategies that might be more efficient or effective?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes. We have seen significant improvement in Afghanistan since the President authorized the deployment of surge forces. These forces have successfully denied Al Qaeda’s ability to use Afghanistan as a base to plan terrorist attacks against the United States and its allies. Our continued presence in Afghanistan is critical to maintaining the improvements of the last few years as we transi-

tion to Afghan security lead by the end of 2014. We must maintain forces at a level that ensures Afghanistan will never again become a safe haven for international terrorist organizations. As we draw down our forces, our commitment to the development of the Afghanistan National Security Forces must be an enduring one. A strong Afghanistan will be a key element to the ultimate defeat of Al Qaeda and will foster greater regional stability.

Mr. GARAMENDI. How much will the Department of Defense spend on the war in Afghanistan each year between now and 2014 when we withdraw our troops? (Please provide figures for each year.) Based on best estimates, how much will this spending contribute to anticipated budget deficits each year? Do you see the rising deficit as a problem for our national security?

Admiral MULLEN. The President's recent announcement of troop drawdown from Afghanistan will change the Department's FY 2012 budget requirements for OEF (OND remains the same), but the exact change will depend on the Commanders' determination of the pace of the drawdown and/or adjustment of the forces mix. The Department is in the process of reformulating its OCO requirements for OEF for FY 2012, and developing its OCO funding requirements for FY 2013. The DoD OCO budget is a bottom-up budget preparation each year and it is configured to support current military strategy and Commander needs. At this time, the Department does not have the information necessary, e.g., military operational plans, to estimate its FY 2014 OCO requirements. Given that the Forces in both OEF and OND are being reduced over time, a reduction in the OCO request logically follows, and will have a positive impact on deficit reduction each successive year. I have stated in numerous forums that I believe the debt is a significant issue to our national security.

Mr. GARAMENDI. When I asked about the cost of the projected strategy, you stated that we are "looking at coming down 30 or 40 billion a year based on the strategy laid out." Based on an unofficial Congressional Research Service estimate, drawing down to 25,000 troops by the end of 2012 (as I proposed in the attached amendment I introduced to the National Defense Authorization Act) would save \$35 billion next year. How do you reconcile the difference between your statement that we would save \$30–40 billion a year by drawing down to 68,000 troops in the summer of 2012 and the estimate that we would save \$35 billion a year by drawing down to 25,000 troops by the end of 2012?

Admiral MULLEN. The \$30–40 billion figure was in reference to the actual reduction in the OCO request from FY11 to FY12. We reduced the total OCO budget by \$41B from FY11 to FY12. We have not reviewed the CRS estimate you mentioned and we do not have specific savings identified for FY12 given that the ISAF Commander is still formulating the final withdrawal plan for FY12 and the final details will not be available for several months.

Mr. GARAMENDI. How many Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) members do you expect will be sufficient to ensure a stable Afghan state after U.S. forces withdraw in 2014? To ensure long-term stability, what average ANSF force levels will need to be maintained over a 5-year period (from 2014 to 2019)? Over a ten-year period (from 2014 to 2024)?

Admiral MULLEN. Long-term planning for the composition of the ANSF is currently in its initial stages. We are working with our coalition partners and GIROA [Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan] to determine the force structure required to ensure that Afghanistan remains secure and stable. Once complete, the ANSF plan of record will establish final projected troop levels. The final composition of the ANSF will be based on security conditions on the ground.

Mr. GARAMENDI. How much will it cost to maintain these ANSF force levels over these periods? How will these costs compare to levels of revenue that the Afghan government is expected to be able to collect over these same time periods? Who will pay for the remaining costs?

Admiral MULLEN. One of the most critical preconditions for Afghans to maintain stability and security will be capable, professional Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The creation of this force allows for the gradual withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces. It is true that support for the ANSF will continue to require international assistance for some years, however as progress is made, the Afghan Government may be able to reduce the size, and therefore cost, of the ANSF to address a diminished threat.

FY12 is the largest Afghan Security Force Fund submission to date, and will complete the majority of initial procurement and infrastructure development for the ANSF. As this initial stand-up cost is paid, the future requests should be less. Specific planning has guided the investment and procurement aimed at systems that can be maintained and supported by the ANSF and specifically steered away from high cost, highly complex systems. This will facilitate a lower long term cost. The level of reduction is currently being developed as part of the FY13 OCO request.

Subsequent assessments will be required each year to identify the overall future requirements.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Under Secretary Flournoy noted that ANSF troop levels will likely be reduced after 2014 because the insurgency will be degraded. How many ANSF members do you expect will be discharged? Are there concerns that having this many unemployed trained fighters could destabilize Afghanistan?

Admiral MULLEN. We do expect to see a reduction in the number of personnel in the ANSF after we have completed the transition process in 2014. The number of personnel that could be discharged from the ANSF has not been determined. The long-term plan for the ANSF is currently being developed. Once completed, the long-term ANSF plan of record will support the conditions on the ground. Our intent is to insure that Afghanistan remains secure and stable long after our drawdown is complete.

There are always concerns about unemployed fighters becoming a destabilizing factor in Afghanistan. It is important to remember that we are currently focusing on professionalization programs for the ANSF. Personnel leaving the ANSF after 2014 will most likely be literate and possess the required skill sets to become productive members of Afghan society.

